

In this document, you will find the calls issued for the 2025 June and November Meetings. The calls are listed in alphabetical order by group name. Please email annualmeeting@aarweb.org with any questions. Proposals are due via PAPERS by March 3, 2025.

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[African Diaspora Religions Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

[The Women Who Made Malcolm X Possible](#)

2025 is the 100th anniversary of Malcolm X/el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, revolutionary, civil/human rights activist, and Muslim minister (May 19, 1925 – February 21, 1965). Centering his work on the work Black women do to usher in freedom, and resurrecting from history the love and teachings of his mother, wife, children, and other women who made him possible we have chosen to honor Malcolm by honoring the Black women of his world.

Writing on the beautiful intersections between Malcolm, Martin and James Baldwin and their mothers, “The Three Mothers,” author, Anna Malaika Tubbs asks, ‘How was Malcolm influenced by Louise Little’s roots from the rebellious Carib island nation of Grenada, she, who spoke several languages, her ‘home-training’ lessons in recitations of the alphabet in French, and admonitions to her children to study, and correct misinformation given by their white teachers?’

C. S’thembile West’s new book, *Nation Women Negotiating Islam: Moving Beyond Boundaries in the Twentieth Century* (2023), redeems the role of women, mothers, sisters, and daughters in the Nation of Islam (NOI). It sits at the intersection of Africana Studies, Religious and Islamic Studies providing the necessary counternarrative to past transgressive discourses. West recognizes and underscores the agency of NOI women in their negotiation of gender norms, sexual propriety, leadership models, education, and family building as a Black national project. Given our current political climate, this book can work as a tool for modeling equity and respectful scholarship on women’s roles as organizers, leaders, and change agents dedicated to uplifting and rehabilitating their communities as stewards of West’s arguments of a “politics of protection.” One of several potential questions to consider is how has the lack of attention to the role of women in X’s life and work reflect a kind of cis/heteronormativity that is bound up with

the white supremacy that X combatted? How might queer and trans analysis help us better understand this role?" We invite paper proposals in conversation with this theme and C. S'thembile West's book.

Potential Co-sponsors: The Religion and Cities Unit, Queer Studies in Religion, Religion and Popular Culture, African Religions Unit, Afro-American Religious History Unit, Ethics Unit, Sociology of Religion Unit, Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, Religion and Memory Unit, Study of Islam Unit, Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit, Contemporary Islam Unit, Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism, and, Islam, Gender, Women Unit

[Precarity: Being as Black Womanhood](#)

Precarity as a threat to the poetics of women in power, of black and Latine women's religious leadership, and in their overall relationship to womanhood, agency, and autonomy is at stake. The ongoing divisiveness that has polarized societal, racial, and gendered distinctions fostering a hyper state of unpredictability asserts a need "to be Sankofic,". A mandate for looking back to where we came from, and learning from it to build futures in this age of terror. Despite the ever-present madness, we are simultaneously holding beauty and the terror with aspirations to override the uncertainty, perform generatively, 'owning our social locations without assuming patriarchal affirmations as the explicit and implicit markers of significance in community, culture, and faith traditions'—to paraphrase Urban Bush Woman founder, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. Potentially by embracing Afrofuturist aesthetics to express our agency, and freedom through art, creative works and activism that envision liberated futures for Black life. Can futurist theorization provide an effective alternative to create a safe place in/or outside of contested spaces for the diverse experiences and cultural narratives of the African and Latine Diasporas? We invite art practitioners and scholars to submit work related to this theme.

Potential Co-sponsors: Body and Religion Unit, Ritual Studies Unit, Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit, Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit, Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit

[Freedom By Another Name: Medicine & Healing in the Era of Slavery](#)

Originating AAR Unit: Religions, Medicines & Healing—Possible AAR Unit Co-Sponsors:
(1) African Diaspora Religions Unit, (2) African Religions Unit, (3) Afro-American Religious History Unit, and (4) Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit

This panel highlights the 2024 presidential theme of “Freedom.” The panel is open to a variety of submissions, including analyses of the use of plant medicines, prayers, divination, laying of hands, ritual baths, and sacred ceremonies used for healing purposes among African descendants in the era of slavery. We welcome studies of slavery in Africa and/or the African Diaspora. We are especially interested in proposals that address how enslaved people experienced harrowing conditions of bondage, faced immense challenges of illness and physical suffering, but also sought freedom and empowerment through the sustained practice of African traditional healing rites.

[Kitchen Table Conversations](#)

“My childhood breakfast table memories amalgamated aromas of coffee brewing, bacon frying, and burning hair from overheated hot combs” – Scott Alves Barton

Today we recognize that along with other knowledge systems, foodways, and faith traditions traveled with Enslaved Africans, as they do within every individual or group in migration, immigration, or as refugees. Yet, we need to ask, “Who sources, cooks, and preserves our foods, and holds our culinary cultural traditions, whether sacred or profane, in feasting or in famine?” Who do we need to be thankful for that placed this food on our table?” In 1990, MacArthur Genius Carrie Mae Weems created her iconic social documentary “Kitchen Table” a photographic series imagining engagements of kith and kin at table. In addition to potential skirmishes, the kitchen table is always already foundational as a locus of commensality; particular ways of knowing, and intergenerational teaching and learning. Our foodways stories share how we are who we are, and what we hold dear, by lauding sacred rites of communion, sacrifice, and succor. Kitchen tables are also sites of homework, needlework, memorialization, putting food by, flirting, healthcare and beauty practices, gossiping, sharing grace, and prayer. Our tables are centers for healing and mourning, strategizing revolutionary change, or starting a radical feminist press...Quoting poet Joy Harjo, “The world begins at a kitchen table, perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing, crying, eating the last sweet bite...” We welcome folks to submit materials for this roundtable discussion.

Potential Co-sponsors: Religion and Food Unit, Religion and Memory Unit, Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit, Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit, Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit, Queer Studies in Religion, and Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit

[Potential co-sponsorship with Space, Place, and Religions and Religion and Memory Units](#) on the relationship between commemorative spaces and global freedom struggles, alterity and racial discrimination.

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
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- Carol Marie Webster, Fordham University
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Online June Annual Meeting 2025

[African Diaspora Religions Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

New Voices in African Diaspora Scholarship and Practice—June Virtual

A lightning talk session by a cadre of young voices, scholars with new research initiatives, and folks with accessibility needs. Preference will be given to parties from the global south who might not be able to attend in November in-person conference. We invite artists, public scholars, and academics engaged in either theoretical or applied practices related to African Diaspora religions. We aspire to nurture new ideas and voices in their process of evolving and expanding their work. Once the lineup has been selected, the papers will be shared with the co-panelists in advance. Following the dissemination of a brief individual summary or theoretical statement, each participant will provide comments to one of their colleagues. After the presentations and initial round of comments, the audience will be invited to provide more extensive Q&A about any of the papers. The ADR chair will help to keep time and provide a closing statement.

Statement of Purpose

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Chairs

- Scott Barton, University of Notre Dame
sbarton3@nd.edu

- Carol Marie Webster, Fordham University
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

African Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 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:

Religion, indigenous languages, and the arts

In recent years, scholars of African religions have become increasingly aware of the important role indigenous languages play in both the practice and study of these traditions. In particular, the use of oral performances in the overlapping forms of praise poetry, sacred narratives and epics, and prayers are deeply embedded in both religious practice and the arts broadly defined. Just as scholars of Western art and Christianity must be attentive to the particularities of Latin, Italian, Greek, or Hebrew, this panel solicits papers that analyze and address the critical role African languages play in uniting African religions and art forms in mutually supporting and dynamic ways. Papers addressing all African languages, religious traditions, and art forms (including Arabic and Islam, diasporic African languages such as Haitian Langaj, various spirit languages, and even European languages that have been integrated into indigenous frameworks and rituals) are welcome. The panel also welcomes proposals engaging *all* art forms (such as dance, clothing, woodcarving, etc.) that have significant links to language and religion but are not performed orally in a narrow sense of the term, as well as reflections on how the use of language affects the interpretation and understanding of African religious and artistic traditions.

Religious 'Freedom' in the Age of AI

The influence and impact of the internet, AI, and social media on public religious participation and performances of religion manifest in various ways. Traditionally, African religions favored face-to-face interaction and in-person participation in ritual and devotional practice. Today, the public sphere has expanded into digital spaces, creating new opportunities for gender inclusivity, greater freedom of religious participation, and innovation in ritual performance and practice. With the rapid spread of information and awareness through digitization, religious devotion and ritual practice are significantly enriched and made more accessible for better or worse. From online divination to social media initiations and even phone consultations, these expanding spaces provide a foundation for new inquiries into what *religious freedom* might symbolize in the contemporary age while decentering how power dynamics, demographic differences, gender, and sexuality operate within religious communities. The African Religions Unit invites proposals examining how digital spaces have shifted and transformed religious devotion and practice, highlighting the role of digital tools such as AI, machine learning, social media, and others in enhancing religious participation within indigenous African religions, including Islam and Christianity.

Religious Nationalism(s) in Africa

Recent decades have seen the rise of religious nationalism(s) around the world – from Hindu nationalism in India to Christian nationalism in Europe and the United States. In Africa, Christian nationalist discourses have occurred not only in countries like Zambia, which was declared a Christian nation, but also in many other African countries where Christians have a significant voice in politics and society. It is even manifested in cases where ethnonationalist groups draw from religious repertoire to fight for independence in countries like South Sudan and Cameroon. African religious nationalist discourses, however, transcend the continent to include other regions of the world. This is manifested in Africans' support for projects such as the Islamic State, Christian Zionism, and the positions of the recently elected president of the United States, Donald Trump. This panel seeks papers that critically engage and theorize the current prevalence of religious nationalist discourses in Africa. What do they tell us about how to study African religions today? How do these discourses shape life in Africa? How do they place Africa in the world? What could be the unconscious or subtext of these religious nationalist discourses?

Indigenous Hermeneutics: Intellectual Sovereignty, Decolonization of African Traditional Religions in the Work of Professor Jacob K. Olupona

As one of the most prominent figures in the history of the field of African religions, Professor Jacob K. Olupona has made numerous significant contributions, perhaps none more transformational than his concept of “indigenous hermeneutics” which extends far beyond the study of religion in Africa. Olupona defines indigenous hermeneutics as “exploring paradigms and modes of interpretation that are explicitly embedded in the traditions we study. Because these traditions are interpretive, our understanding of them should take into consideration how they provide meaning to those who encounter them” as a way to address common, but “serious problems, including mistranslation and distortions of meaning.” Having not only structured his research and publication around this important theoretical intervention, Olupona has also made it central to how he has mentored and trained a large number of scholars in the field. This panel/roundtable seeks/is composed of papers that address and highlight the critical role indigenous hermeneutics is playing in the growing field of African religions, how it can and should influence the field going forward, what it has to offer religious studies in general and other fields and disciplines besides. The panel/roundtable will conclude with Prof. Olupona offering his experiences with indigenous hermeneutics and his hopes for this methodology with the next generation of Africanists and religious studies scholars.

Statement of Purpose

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.

Chairs

- David Ngong
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- Georgette Ledgister, Harvard University
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Afro-American Religious History Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 Annual Meeting in Boston, we are especially interested in proposals that engage one or more of the following topics:

CELEBRATING THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY UNIT

2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the first meeting of the Afro-American Religious History Unit. The Unit grew out of a 1973 meeting of 15 scholars, librarians and graduate students interested in "the advancement of scholarly research in black religious history." In December, 1974, The Unit was formed and held its first sessions at the October 1975 American Academy of Religion conference in Chicago. Two panels were presented—one on "Slave Religion, The Black Church, and Reconstruction," featuring papers by Albert J. Raboteau, and Herman E. Thomas, and the other on "Black Theology and the Black Church" with papers by James M. Washington, David Wills and Randall K. Burkett, with Albert J. Raboteau presiding. At that meeting, the Unit organized a steering committee of four—Raboteau, Wills, Burkett and Washington, with the first two being chairpersons. The Unit recorded the names of 30 individuals from all

over the country and a variety of institutions as members of the Unit. All of this is and more is recorded in the *Newsletter of the Afro-American Religious History Unit*, which was edited by Randall K. Burkett and debuted in the fall of 1976.

These pioneer scholar-organizers of our field intended to share historical research into African American religious life and experience, and through the *Newsletter* to foster community and research in the field. Today the Unit is intellectually vibrant and features scholarship that is driving the conversation about religion and its role in society.

We solicit papers and panel proposals honoring this auspicious action by scholars in search of and building intellectual community around the history of Black religious experience. Papers and panels addressing the following themes are especially welcome:

- The historical and historiographic footprints and imprints of these early scholars, including Randall Burkett, Albert Raboteau, David Wills and James M. Washington and their students
- Reflecting on the evolution of the field of Afro-American religious history and current directions
- Evolution of queries, interpretations and methodological insights raised in the *Newsletter*
- Bibliographic method and practice in the study of African American religious history

[Freedom By Another Name: Medicine & Healing in the Era of Slavery](#)

(Co-Sponsors: Religions, Medicines & Healing; Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit; and Afro-American Religious History Units)

This panel highlights the 2024 presidential theme of “Freedom.” The panel is open to a variety of submissions, including analyses of the use of plant medicines, prayers, divination, laying of hands, ritual baths, and sacred ceremonies used for healing purposes among African descendants in the era of slavery. We welcome studies of slavery in Africa and/or the African Diaspora. We are especially interested in proposals that address how enslaved people experienced harrowing conditions of bondage, faced immense challenges of illness and physical suffering, but also sought freedom and empowerment through the sustained practice of African traditional healing rites.

Link to Presidential Theme, "Freedom," by AAR President 2025, Leela Prasad:
<https://aarweb.org/AARMBR/Events-and-Networking-/Annual-Meeting-/Presidential-Theme-2025-AM.aspx>

[The Women Who Made Malcolm X Possible with C. S'thembile West](#)

Co-Sponsors: African Diaspora Religions and Afro-American Religious History Units

2025 is the 100th anniversary of the birth of Malcolm X/el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, revolutionary, civil/human rights activist, and Muslim minister (May 19, 1925 – February 21, 1965). Centering his work on the work Black women do to usher in freedom, and resurrecting from history the love and teachings of his mother, wife, children, and other women who made him possible we have chosen to honor Malcolm by honoring the Black women of his world.

Writing on the beautiful intersections between Malcolm, Martin, and James Baldwin and their mothers, "The Three Mothers," author, Anna Malaika Tubbs asks, 'How was Malcolm influenced by Louise Little's roots from the rebellious Carib island nation of Grenada, she, who spoke several languages, her 'home-training' lessons in recitations of the alphabet in French, and admonitions to her children to study, and correct misinformation given by their white teachers?'

C. S'thembile West's new book, *Nation Women Negotiating Islam: Moving Beyond Boundaries in the Twentieth Century* (2023), redeems the role of women, mothers, sisters, and daughters in the Nation of Islam (NOI). It sits at the intersection of Africana Studies, Religious and Islamic Studies providing the necessary counternarrative to past transgressive discourses. West recognizes and underscores the agency of NOI women in their negotiation of gender norms, sexual propriety, leadership models, education, and family building as a Black national project. Given our current political climate, this book can work as a tool for modeling equity and respectful scholarship on women's roles as organizers, leaders, and change agents dedicated to uplifting and rehabilitating their communities as stewards of West's arguments of a "politics of protection."

We invite paper proposals in conversation with this theme and C. S'thembile West's book.

Author Meets Respondents Session on *Underworld Work: Black Atlantic Religion Making in Jim Crow New Orleans* with Ahmad Greene-Hayes

(Co-Sponsors: Religion and Sexuality; Queer Studies in Religion, and Afro-American Religious History Units)

Closed for submissions.

Author Meets Respondents Session on *Black Religions in the Madhouse: Race and Psychiatry in Slavery's Wake* with Judith Weisenfeld

(Co-Sponsors: Science, Technology and Religion and Afro- American Religious History Units)

Closed for submissions.

In general the Unit would be very excited to receive paper, roundtable and panel proposals addressing the following themes in African American Religious History:

- Complex Afro-Protestant institutions (HBCUs, Prince Hall Freemasons/Order of the Eastern Star, Greek organizations)
- Black Religions, property, land, and the environment
- Black material religions, the instruments/sources/archives used to produce Black religious materiality
- African-American Religion and climate catastrophe, broadly configured
- African-American Religion and so called "illicit" practices
- Redressing the historiographical dearth of LGBTQI+ African American religious histories
- Rethorizations of the geographical and cultural boundaries of African-American Religion in relationship to the concept of the West and the Borderlands
- Graduate education and pedagogy in African(a) American Religious History
- African American Religious History and slavery/freedom
- Sources from the Archives of African American Religious History
- Intellectual Trajectories in the Study of African-American Religion - Highlighting Undergraduate & Graduate Student Work
 - Proposals for five-to-seven-minute presentations of term papers, dissertation chapter drafts or other short pieces in development are especially welcome.

- Poster presentations (engage undergrad/grad students) that lead into a panel presentation

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's themes;
- 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 the 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

- Matthew Cressler
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- Nicole Turner, Yale University
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Anglican Studies Seminar

Call for Proposals

The Anglican Studies Seminar is a five-year research initiative focused on the “operative ecclesiologies” of Anglicans in various contexts worldwide. In Year 1, our discussion focused on the historical legacies shaping Anglican ecclesiologies in various contexts; in Year 2, papers investigated theological factors; in year Year 3, papers that surface missiological currents within Anglicanism, past and present, framed the discussion on the formation of Anglican identities and the ecclesiologies that arise alongside those identities.

The focus for Year 4 is on how ministerial and pastoral practices are shaped simultaneously by local contexts and contribute to the formation of Anglican identities. How is the mission of churches in the Anglican world interpreted by the contextual elements that inform the shape of Anglican identities in each place? How are local pastoral practices shaped by languages, cultures, and local contexts? These ways of “living ecclesiology” contribute to a better understanding of the realities we are talking about when considering the form of Christianity we call “Anglican.” Papers that address “operative ecclesiologies” from the perspective of practical theologies, pastoral and spiritual care, and interdisciplinary approaches to ministerial and pastoral practice are invited for Year 4. Papers that emphasize decolonial and postcolonial dynamics at work in forming and maintaining “operative ecclesiologies,” particularly in understudied regions of the Anglican Communion, and the Anglican majority world, are especially welcome. Public scholarship that addresses Anglican ecclesiologies from the perspective of ministerial and pastoral practice is also welcome.

Please note that those whose proposals are accepted must commit to submitting their paper for pre-circulation through the AAR mobile app by Monday, October 13, 2025. 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 in their entirety by the 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 2025 Annual Meeting in Boston.

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 identities 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 Anglicans at the local, 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
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Animals and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 Annual Meeting's presidential theme: "Freedom."

- Animal–human commonality outside of concepts like personhood, consciousness, moral standing, or subjectivity. How should we understand our commonality with other lives along the lines of breath, suffering, kinship, nourishment, or growth?
- Consent and coercion. We are interested in papers analyzing the role of religion in the assumption and/or projection of animal consent, the manufacturing or mythologizing animal consent, and coercive relations to animal (e.g. containment, sacrifice, or labor of various kinds).
- Family, kinship, packs, and relatedness. We are interested in analysis of religious texts, teachings, practices, and rituals that attend to the bonds between animals themselves, between different species of animals, and between humans and other animals. What role does religion have in shaping fictive kinships and chosen families?
- Fascism and animals. How do animals and animality play into the formation of civic pieties, national identities, racial and ethnic hierarchies, and narratives that validate authoritarian takeover in democracies?
- Domestication and sacrifice: We are interested in papers that attend to the role of religion in the linked power structures inherent in relations of domestication and sacrifice.
- Trash animals. How do religious texts and traditions engage with animals that are neither wild nor domestic, but occupy the liminal spaces at the edges of human society—the rats, racoons, squirrels, pigeons, and others that surround human habitation, but don't quite "belong."
- The religions of animals. We are interested in analysis of practices, traditions, and cultures among animals that could be recognized as religious. These "religious animals" might be found in human texts and traditions, or through empirical observation and ethological research.

- Animals and the vegetal turn. How should ongoing research into modes of sentience, communication, and community beyond the animal world impact the ways that we think about animals and religion?
- 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
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- Katharine Mershon, Western Carolina University
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Anthropology of Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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:

- *The Anthropology of Freedom*. With the year's presidential theme being "Freedom", we invite papers that seek to theorize, problematize, and otherwise critically examine what is meant by this term. How can anthropological perspectives help us understand how freedom is constructed and enacted under varying political, legal, and religious regimes? In keeping with our unit's ethnological aims, we are especially interested in proposals that examine how "freedom" is mobilized in cultural contexts outside of the Global North and in socio-political systems not rooted in classical Euro-American Liberalism.
- *Anthropology and the AAR*. This year will mark the 25th anniversary of the Anthropology of Religion Unit's work within the AAR. How have anthropological theories and methods contributed to religious studies as an interdisciplinary field? How has participation in the AAR shifted anthropologists' conversations around religion and religions?
- *Sensorial Landscapes and the Senses*. What can anthropologists of religion offer to the expanding scholarship on the senses? What theoretical lenses work best to situate these categories ethnographically?
- [*Anthropology of Food and Religion*](#). (Potential co-sponsorship with Religion and Food Unit) What theoretical, methodological, and ethical innovations come from engaging in the anthropological study of religion through food and foodways?

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) significant term(s) or questions 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

- Brendan Jamal Thornton, University of North Carolina At Chapel Hill
brendan_thornton@unc.edu
- Eric Hoenes Del Pinal, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
ehoenes@uncc.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Anthropology of Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

We invite proposals from the full range of ethnographic theories and methods exploring diverse traditions, regions, topics, periods, and standpoints from across the discipline. We are especially interested in sessions with the following themes and qualities:

- *Audio-visual Anthropology*. We welcome presentations designed to leverage the benefits of the on-line format by prominently incorporating audio and visual components that do not always work well at in-person sessions.
- *Developing Shared Projects*. Sessions designed to either kick-start shared projects among geographically dispersed researchers, or to help existing groups further develop existing projects (such workshopping papers from past sessions into a special issue or edited volume.)
- *Author(s) Meet Critics*. Up to three authors engaging with one another's recent books around common themes and questions, or multiple respondents commenting on a single new work from various perspectives.

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brendan_thornton@unc.edu
- Eric Hoenes Del Pinal, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
ehoenes@uncc.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Artificial Intelligence and Religion Exploratory Session

Call for Proposals

Scholars of religion and theology add a crucial voice to the ethics of artificial intelligence. In keeping with this year's conference theme, we seek papers that address how A.I., religion, and theology together might enhance, limit, or complicate the concept of freedom at the intersection of religion and theology, and engage a social justice-oriented lens through which to explore artificial intelligence. We will have two sessions. One session will focus on theory and one on A.I. experiments.

For our theory session, we seek papers that focus on human agency, and AI agents. What does agency mean and how might agency be changing in relation to AI? We are seeing the development of AI agents including computer agents able to perform tasks on computers and the internet, self-driving cars, AI voice assistants, semi-autonomous drones, and other warfare agents. Questions regarding moral responsibility, and what it means to be free, evoke reflections on accountability and what it means to be human. For example, if AI concierges can take the place of human travel assistants, how might this substitution not only affect job loss but also the relational connections between people? Community and moral responsibility have been significant religious and

theological issues, and AI is adding complexity to these issues. How might religion and theology illuminate and add layers to agency in a technological world? We encourage proposals that address racialized, gendered, sexed, and/or differently abled perspectives. We welcome original papers that pose new questions.

Additionally, we seek proposals that show experiments using artificial intelligence in the study of religion. Scholars who are finding new applications for AI are encouraged to submit an abstract proposal even if their project is conceptual, in early stages, or ongoing. Follow-up reports on projects already presented are likewise welcome.

Statement of Purpose

The study of religion and its interactions with culture has long been a crucial aspect of the humanities. As our world continues to evolve and change, it is more important than ever to understand the ways in which religion shapes and is shaped by the societies and cultures it exists within. One area of our society that is currently undergoing rapid development is artificial intelligence (A.I.). As A.I. technology advances, it is increasingly likely that it will have a significant impact on religion, theologies, and religious studies. For this reason, it is important for religious studies scholars/theologians to carefully consider the ways in which A.I. might affect and be affected by religious practices, beliefs, and communities. This unit provides a forum for scholars to engage in critical and interdisciplinary discussions of the ways in which A.I. is impacting religion and religious studies, as well as the ways in which religious language and concepts are used in discussions of artificial intelligence. By bringing together experts from a wide range of disciplines, this exploratory session provides valuable insights into the complex and rapidly-evolving relationship between A.I. and religion.

Chairs

- Randall Reed
reedrw@appstate.edu
- Tracy J. Trothen, Queen's University
trothent@queensu.ca

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Artificial Intelligence and Religion Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

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Chairs

- Randall Reed
reedrw@appstate.edu
- Tracy J. Trothen, Queen's University
trothent@queensu.ca

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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. We welcome open call for papers.

1-Songs and Artistic Expressions of Freedom. Contact- Adam Newman,
anewman4@illinois.edu

This panel examines the paradoxes of freedom in an era of repeatedly undermined human rights. We invite submissions from artists and scholars whose work challenges the cooption of freedom's language by oppressive groups, resists systemic oppression, and/or affirms enduring and transformative visions of freedom. Contributions that critically engage with systemic struggles while imagining pathways toward justice and liberation are particularly encouraged.

2-Poetics of Comparison. A Round table. Contact-Gloria M. Hernández,
ghernandez@wcupa.edu and George Pati, george.pati@valpo.edu

In our post-colonial era, comparativists face the dual challenge of adhering to rigorous methodological standards while embracing the creative dynamics of comparison. This roundtable seeks to examine the poetics inherent to the comparative process, understanding poetics both as *poiesis*— the creation of new meanings— and as a form of linguistic play.

We invite proposals involving religious and theological comparisons that incorporate the poetic and affective dimensions of the objects being compared. We also welcome analysis of comparative methodologies through the lens of poetics, and explorations of the dialogue between comparison and creativity.

3-Exploring Religious Freedom through Art-Based Research. Organizer: Angela Hummel, ahummel@iliff.edu

Call for works of art-based research and accompanying papers. This panel will focus on visual art-based research (painting, sculpture, photography, concrete poetry, etc.). We are more interested in what new insight the creation of the artwork provided you than in judging the art creations. We welcome any and all visual art forms exploring religious freedom from any and all religions. The works of art will be placed on display before the panel begins (if the work of art is too large to travel to AAR, we invite artists to create photos of the works of art that can be brought and put on display). Presenters will then share what new knowledge their creative work surfaced. Applicants should submit a description of their medium(s), what particular aspect of religious freedom they explored through the art based research, and a brief summary of their findings.

4- Arts, Literature, and Religion at the Centennial of 1925. Contact-Cooper Harriss, charriss@iu.edu

1925 was a pivotal year for modernism in the arts, marked by works that redefined cultural and aesthetic boundaries. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* chronicled jazz age excess, Alain Locke's *The New Negro* heralded a new Black cultural consciousness, and Surrealism pushed representation beyond reality. Frida Kahlo began exploring identity through folk art, Sergei Einstein released *Battleship Potemkin*, and artists like Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong transformed music. The Scopes Trial and the Grand Ole Opry broadcast highlighted tensions between modernity, tradition, and religion. This session invites papers examining how works and movements of 1925 challenge, transform, or preserve religion, and what new categories of meaning they offer for Arts, Literature, and Religion in 2025 and beyond.

[5- Transhuman Mysticisms: Animals, Aliens, and Objects \(co-sponsored with the Mysticism Unit\)](#)

This panel considers new approaches to the study of mysticism and the arts, with an emphasis on non-human, more-than-human, and transhuman “mysticisms,” particularly as expressed in visual art, music, film, and science fiction. Topics to be considered include:

- Multi-species mysticisms
- Mysticisms of unfolding: micro- and macrocosmic realities and hierarchies of emergence
- “Astro” mysticisms and “outer” spaces, particularly as represented in film, literature, and the arts
- The “supernatural”: mysticism and ecology/biology; "plant mysticisms"
- Mysticism and Science Fiction
- Mysticism and/as "outsider art"
- Mysticism and New Materialism

[6- Religion, Art, and Political Reimagination \(co-sponsored with The Religion, Social Conflicts, and Peace Unit\)](#)

The Art, Literature, and Religion Unit and The Religion, Social Conflicts, and Peace Unit are seeking papers for a co-sponsored session on "Religion, Art, and Political Reimagination." We are interested in exploring the role of religion in art and the production, disruption, and reconfiguration of political imagination. We are likewise interested in identifying the relevance of art and religious meaning-making and remaking in processes of social and political protests and visions of alternative political futures.

We seek papers that focus on the following (not an exhaustive list of topics):

- religion and literatures of resistance, exile, and annihilation
- protest art and slogans
- art and disruption of weaponized religious symbols
- art, religion, and the imagination of justice
- art, religion, and political domination
- art amid genocide

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

- George Pati, Valparaiso University
george.pati@valpo.edu
- Gloria Hernández, West Chester University
ghernandez@wcupa.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit

Call for Proposals

1. Asian American Religions and Freedom in Transnational Context

We invite papers that consider how Asian Americans have utilized and/or complicated US national myths about freedom, especially when considering Asian American religions in a transnational context. How might we reimagine the American notion of “freedom” through the transnational and lived experiences of Asian American communities? How do Asian diasporic memories of war, migration, displacement, and racial capitalism (including transnational labor struggles) challenge and reshape understandings of freedom? How does the intergenerational trauma of war, colonization, and migration problematize dominant discourses of freedom in US history and culture? What does freedom mean and look like under American imperial power and military presence, especially for Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander communities? Especially since 2025 is the 50-year anniversary of the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, we welcome papers that explore the role of religion at the intersection of US empire, militarism, Asian American refugees, and the meaning of “freedom.” How

might Asian Americans offer new frameworks for reimagining freedom through their religious, cultural and theological perspectives and experiences?

2. Asian American Religions, Freedom and the Fight for Ethnic Studies

If Boston is the historic home of freedom fighters, why are the struggles for Ethnic Studies, including Asian American Studies, still ongoing battles in New England, and for that matter, throughout the country? Over five decades after the founding of the first College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University, students are still fighting for a space for Asian American Studies/Ethnic Studies in their curriculum—whether it be at the undergraduate, masters or doctoral level, and in religious studies and theological studies classrooms. Indeed, the humanities and higher education as a whole are at the heart of political debates over critical race theory, normative histories, and “wokeness.” We invite papers that critically examine the relationship between “freedom” and ethnic studies, and how this impacts the study of Asian American religions? How is the struggle for freedom and ethnic studies further complicated by the way Asian Americans have been framed as harmed by affirmative action? How do these battles for ethnic studies, freedom and racial equality on college campuses impact the study of Asian American religions? How do they shape the Asian American expression of religion on campuses? What might the work of ethnic studies pioneers, such as the late Gary Okihiro (1945-2024) have to say about these ongoing struggles?

[3. Asian American Religious Conservatism: co-sponsorship with Hinduism in North America](#)

As we prepare for another Trump administration, the impact on minoritized and marginalized communities will be significant. While we have often discussed the potential impact in terms of migration, labor, and race, we require more discussion about the internal divisions within non-majoritarian communities in the US and in North America. This session examines the rise of Asian American conservatism, broadly construed. We seek to understand the various communities that identify as “Asian,” “Asian American” and “conservative” within a landscape of politics that embraces anti-immigrant sentiment and policies, finds common cause with anti-equity policies in education, and even seeks to promote majoritarian (read: white) victimhood politics. For example, in response to the Heritage foundation’s Project 2025 manifesto, the Hindu American Foundation, a Hindu nationalist organization in the US, released its own document titled Hindu American Project 2025, seeking Trump’s endorsement. How to understand such a manifesto at the intersection of race, religion, nation and politics?

Indeed, in this session, we ask: When we consider Asian American religious conservatisms across our religiously and ethnically diverse communities, what does "conservatism" mean for them? How is their conservatism structured "within the formation of Asian America itself," as Adrian De Leon and Jane Hong have argued? To what extent has the embrace of Islamophobia or anti-Blackness shaped Asian American religious conservatisms? How have religious nationalisms—both within and outside of the North American context, including white Christian nationalism—shaped Asian American religious conservatisms?

[4. East Asian Self-Cultivation Practices in Transnational Perspective; co-sponsorship with Japanese Religions, Korean Religions, Chinese Religions](#)

Practices of self-cultivation 修養 (*xiuyang, suyang, shūyō*) / 修身 (*xiushen, susin, shūshin*) have a long history within East Asian religion, medicine, education, and arts (especially martial arts), as a means to foster perfection of the self, physical health, moral development, and social harmony. These practices often emphasize *qi / ki* 氣 — the basic “stuff” of existence, often understood as a life force — as a vehicle for harmonizing the individual body-mind with universal principles and cosmic forces. While these self-cultivation practices evoke and invoke East Asian homelands, and have long circulated across intra-regional borders, they also circulate in wide-reaching transnational currents, including in Asian diasporas and in the so-called New Age movement, interacting with forces like race, Orientalism, and empire. This panel invites scholars who are interested in a conversation regarding the use of the concept of “self-cultivation” in dialogue with the categories of “religion,” “(East) Asia,” and/or “Asian American” to discuss its utility for the field of religious studies, and explore its potential evolution as a concept and discipline.

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
- Jesse Lee
l.jesse@wustl.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Augustine and Augustinianisms Unit

Call for Proposals

Augustine and "the Public"

As a bishop, preacher, theologian, and correspondent, Augustine engaged a range of publics by virtue of his role as both an ecclesial and political figure as well as the range of modes in which he wrote. He was also deeply concerned with the social, ethical, and political effects – for good and for ill – of a range of cultural media (including literature, philosophy, preaching, rhetoric) as well as public events (including rites and festivals). We invite papers from any and all disciplines examining the theme of “the public” in Augustine’s thought and reception, especially with a view to how this intersects with themes of freedom and domination. Papers might address, for example, the concept of the public or of “counterpublics” in relation to Augustine and Augustinianisms; Augustine as a public theologian and rhetorician; particular themes or characteristics of Augustine’s engagement with various publics; or how Augustine has been received and deployed to serve public or political ends.

Augustine the African

Supplementing our open call for papers, we are planning a roundtable discussion of Catherine Conybeare's forthcoming book, *Augustine the African*. Using extant letters and other shards of evidence, Conybeare retraces Augustine's travels, revealing how his groundbreaking works emerge from an exile's perspective within an African context. In its depiction of this Christian saint, *Augustine the African* upends conventional wisdom and traces core ideas of Christian thought to their origins on the African continent.

[Participatory Thought in the Platonic and Augustinian Tradition](#)

[This call is for a possible co-sponsored session supported by the AAR Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit & Augustine and Augustinianisms Unit](#)

The past several years have witnessed renewed interest in participatory metaphysics, a key conceptual element of the Platonic tradition. Participation has been employed in different ways to conceptualize the relationship between God and creation, transcendence and immanence, and the One in the many. In this context Augustine, and numerous figures influenced by his thought, have made important and innovative contributions to this tradition. As such, it represents a theological and philosophical conversation that has continued across centuries. This panel invites papers that consider participatory metaphysics that examine either Augustine and Augustine-influenced thinkers, as well as papers that consider participation in the wider Platonic tradition.

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

- Sarah Stewart-Kroeker, University of Geneva
sarah.stewartkroeker@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Bahá'í Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The Bahá'í Studies Unit invites submissions that engage with the history, texts, and practices of the Bahá'í community. The unit is also interested in papers that explore how the Bahá'í Faith intersects with methodologies in the study of religion. We seek to understand the unique ways in which Bahá'ís approach the study of their own faith and of other religions. Proposals may address how Bahá'ís incorporate theological perspectives into their scholarly work or examine Bahá'í beliefs and practices through the lens of theories and approaches in the study of religion.

Thanks to generous support from the Corinne True Center for Bahá'í History, the unit provides individual grants of up to \$500 to help cover travel and participation costs at the AAR annual meeting for presenters whose proposals are accepted.

Statement of Purpose

The Bahá'í Studies Unit explores a wide range of topics within Bahá'í studies including, but not limited to, Bahá'í theology, philosophy, mysticism, history, law, institutions, identity, spiritual psychology, devotional practices, and community life. We also focus on the application of Bahá'í social teachings to contemporary issues such as racial justice, gender equality, the intersection of science and religion, socio-economic inequality, nonviolent social change, and global interconnectedness. Our unit aims to foster a diverse scholarly environment that brings together various perspectives and traditions.

Chairs

- Christopher Glen White
chwhite@vassar.edu

- Omid Ghaemmaghmi, State University of New York (SUNY) at Binghamton
omid@binghamton.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Bioethics and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

The Bioethics and Religion Unit invites proposals for the 2025 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Boston. We welcome submissions that explore the intersection of bioethics, religion, and society through diverse methodological and disciplinary approaches. Proposals addressing the following themes are particularly encouraged. We also welcome proposals that address innovative or emerging topics related to religion and bioethics not explicitly listed below:

1. AI and Bioethics:

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare and other domains raises complex ethical and religious questions. How does AI challenge traditional conceptions of autonomy, dignity, and the physician-patient relationship? What theological or ethical insights might guide the use of AI in decision-making, predictive medicine, or healthcare resource allocation? We seek papers that address these issues, as well as broader concerns such as bias in AI algorithms, the ethical implications of AI replacing human roles, and the role of religion in shaping AI ethics.

2. Revisiting Principlism in Bioethics:

The principles of biomedical ethics laid out by Beauchamp and Childress have long been foundational in bioethics. We invite proposals that critically evaluate these principles in light of contemporary challenges, such as health inequities, cultural differences, and evolving technologies. How do these principles interact with religious perspectives or moral traditions? Are there alternative frameworks emerging that challenge the dominance of principle-based ethics in bioethics?

3. Medicine and Christian Nationalism:

The intersection of medicine and White Christian nationalism is a growing area of concern, particularly regarding public health policy, vaccine hesitancy, and reproductive

healthcare. How does the ideology of White Christian nationalism influence bioethical decision-making or healthcare access? We invite papers that explore the impact of religious nationalism on medical ethics, public health policies, and the lived experiences of healthcare providers and patients.

4. Genetic Testing:

The rise of publicly traded DNA and genetic testing companies raises critical questions about the ethics of identity, privacy, and the commercialization of genetic data. How do these companies shape understandings of race, ethnicity, and community through their work? What are the implications for social justice, especially regarding the formation of racial "groups" or the potential misuse of genetic information? Submissions may address ethical and theological perspectives on the commodification of genetic data and its impact on individual and collective identities.

5. Digital Twins and Bioethics:

The development of "digital twins"—virtual replicas of human beings created for medical or technological purposes—introduces new ethical and theological challenges. How might digital twins influence medical diagnostics, treatment planning, or patient autonomy? Are there moral or spiritual implications for creating a digital counterpart of a person? Papers exploring the ethical, theological, and societal ramifications of digital twins in healthcare and other settings are encouraged.

6. Healthcare for the Incarcerated:

Incarcerated individuals face significant barriers to adequate healthcare, raising critical questions about justice, dignity, and human rights. How do religious and ethical frameworks address the healthcare needs of the incarcerated, particularly in the context of systemic inequities and punitive practices? We welcome proposals that examine the ethics of medical care for the incarcerated, the role of chaplaincy, and broader issues of health justice within the carceral system.

7. [Co-sponsored Session with the Religion, Medicine, and Healing Unit](#)

[Public Policy, Religion, and Healing:](#)

This panel will examine the dynamic relationships between individual freedom and collective responsibility in the context of public health and health policy. We invite paper proposals that explore the intersections of religion, healing, and public policy, with a particular focus on the tensions between government interventions and individual

autonomy. In the wake of the Dobbs decision, we particularly welcome papers that examine the complex dynamics between individual reproductive justice and government interventions, exploring the broader implications for autonomy and public policy. We also invite contributions that investigate how religious beliefs and practices shape sexual and reproductive health policies, including their impacts on intimate partner violence and harm. We are especially interested in work that explores collective efforts to advocate for freedom in the face of structural barriers. Additionally, this panel seeks papers that critically analyze theories of health promotion and autonomy within public health initiatives, as well as religious exemptions to public health mandates (e.g. religious vaccine exemptions). We encourage submissions from diverse methodological approaches, including public health, theology, religious studies, sociology, political science, and bioethics.

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

- Amy Michelle DeBaets
Amy.debaets@gmail.com
- Hajung Lee, University of Puget Sound
hjlee@pugetsound.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Black Theology Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 theme: "Freedom," we invite submissions that explore black theological discourse through topics such as:

- The 50th Anniversary of James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*
- Black Theology and "freedom" as expressed through Black Nationalisms
- Black Theology and Economic Liberation
- Black Theology and Sovereignty
- "Is God a White Racist?" Black Theology and Freedom as Discursive Theodicy
- Black Theology and Black Pneumatologies
- Black Theology and African Indigenous Religion as Freedom
- Black Theology and Black Freedom - Is Christianity "good religion" for Black people?
- Black Theology and Black Women's Political Labor
- Black Theology and Black Aesthetics
- Black Theology and White Nationalism
- Black Theology and Quare/Queer Freedom

We also invite paper and/or panel submissions on:

- New directions and methods in the field of Black Theology
- Books recently authored by Black religious scholars
- 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
jawanza.clark@manhattan.edu
- Jennifer S. Leath, Queen's University
jennifer.s.leath@gmail.com

Body and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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:

- 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: games and play, freedom and the body, assemblages, collectivities and the body politic, suffering bodies, and/or disability and accessibility.

*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.

Statement of Purpose

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

- Gwendolyn Gillson, Illinois College
gwendolyn.gillson@ic.edu
- Iva Patel, Augsburg University
pateli@augsborg.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit

Call for Proposals

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

In light of 2025 AAR President Leela Prasad’s annual meeting theme of “Freedom,” we welcome proposals that offer constructive explorations of Bonhoeffer’s theological, practical, and ethical legacy as it pertains to “freedom” in relation to any of the diverse purposes to which this theme is put by Bonhoeffer and/or those who have found Bonhoeffer generative for their own liberative theologies and praxes—including though by no means limited to Barth, Cone, Gutierrez, Krötke, Ruether, Townes, Tutu, and others.

As 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of Bonhoeffer's death (April 9, 1945), and in light of the AAR Presidential theme of "Freedom," we also welcome papers that engage Bonhoeffer's theology, ethics, poetry, and fiction in relation to the themes of freedom, resistance, death, and resurrection.

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
- Matthew Puffer, Valparaiso University
matthew.puffer@valpo.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Buddhism and Caste

Call for Proposals

With the recent rise of the interdisciplinary field of critical caste studies, scholars of South Asian religion have come together to examine how caste hierarchies are created

and maintained in India and how these structures are resisted by caste-oppressed and anti-caste actors. In recognition that, like South Asian studies, mainstream Buddhist Studies has lacked a sustained engagement with the construction of caste and counter-hegemonic anti-caste worldviews, this seminar seeks to bring together scholars of premodern and modern Buddhism who approach the field from the areas of history, anthropology, philosophy, literary, and decolonial studies.

In the inaugural year of the Buddhism and Caste seminar, we are especially interested in rethinking South Asian Buddhist history from the perspective of subaltern and critical caste studies. While acknowledging the difficulty of recovering subaltern voices in the South Asian literary record, we aim to reconsider South Asian Buddhist history from the perspective of critical caste studies. We ask what a critical caste studies approach to Buddhist history reveals about the monastic institution and the Buddhist literary and philosophical tradition. We seek to uncover how caste is (re)produced in Buddhist contexts and how critical caste studies can generate subaltern historiographies of the Buddhist tradition. We additionally seek to understand how South Asian Buddhist studies can contribute to broader understandings of caste, as well as anti-caste work.

We seek diverse perspectives and welcome applicants working in various regions, religious traditions, disciplines, and time periods. We also encourage innovative proposals that allow specialists of different fields to present on shared or connected themes. We are especially interested in proposals from underrepresented groups, including graduate students, contingent faculty, scholars from caste-oppressed backgrounds, scholars of color, scholars of LGBTQ communities, and scholars with disabilities.

Statement of Purpose

The current historical moment poses unique challenges and opportunities for scholars of South Asia and the South Asian diaspora. In recent years, scholars and activists have been sounding alarms over threats and calls for violence made by increasingly powerful ultra-nationalist Hindu forces (Hindutva) against marginalized communities, including Muslims, Dalits, Ādivāsi, LGBTQIA communities, and groups seeking equality and justice for women. Calls for violence are supported by a public discourse of historical distortion that presents Brahmins (the highest caste) as the primary agents of historical transformation and position subaltern communities as peripheral at best and at worst enemies of Indian civilization. This ultra-nationalist model presumes the inevitable triumph of Brahmanical imperial hegemony over the diverse regional cultures of premodern South Asia. As Dalit civil rights organizations like Equality Labs illustrate,

caste is not isolated to South Asia but moves with the diaspora, where it intersects with gender, racial, and religious discourses in other countries.

With the recent rise of the interdisciplinary field of critical caste studies, scholars of South Asian religion have come together to examine how caste hierarchies are created and maintained in India and how these structures are resisted by caste-oppressed and anti-caste actors. In recognition that, like South Asian studies, mainstream Buddhist Studies has lacked a sustained engagement with the construction of caste and counter-hegemonic anti-caste worldviews, this seminar seeks to bring together scholars of premodern and modern Buddhism who approach the field from the areas of history, anthropology, philosophy, literary, and decolonial studies. Our goal is to provide a collaborative environment to investigate how caste has structured the history of Buddhism and Buddhist Studies, as well as the tools that Buddhism can offer for anti-caste, anti-racist, and postcolonial movements.

We aim to generate scholarship around five interconnected themes across the five years of the seminar. We wish to gain a better understanding of (1) caste-centered focuses of Buddhist history; (2) the role of caste in Buddhist communities outside of India; (3) the enduring legacy of B.R. Ambedkar and Ambedkarite Buddhism; (4) the intersection of caste with other forms of inequality, including gender, sexuality, and race; (5) methodological reflections on how a focus on caste changes Buddhist Studies scholarship and pedagogy.

We seek diverse perspectives and welcome applicants working in various regions, religious traditions, disciplines, and time periods. We also encourage innovative proposals that allow specialists of different fields to present on shared or connected themes. We are especially interested in proposals from underrepresented groups, including graduate students, contingent faculty, scholars from caste-oppressed backgrounds, scholars of color, scholars of LGBTQ communities, and scholars with disabilities.

Chairs

- Adeana McNicholl, Vanderbilt University
adeana.mcnicholl@vanderbilt.edu
- Nicholas Witkowski
nwickowski@ntu.edu.sg

Buddhism in the West Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

[This year, we are particularly interested in papers that might address Buddhist Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care](#), for a potential co-sponsorship with the Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit. If you are interested in submitting a paper for this panel, please get in touch with Dr Leigh Miller (program@maitripa.org).

In addition to panels and papers related to the AAR's presidential theme, "Freedom," the Unit is also particularly interested this year in the following:

- Buddhism and Indigeneity
- Buddhism in the West - 'Beyond the Side Hustle' (please contact Courtney Bruntz, cbruntz@southeast.edu, and Thomas Calobrisi, tcalobrisi@shin-ibs.edu)
- Buddhism in New England (to reflect the location of the next AAR)
- Buddhist resistance movements
- Buddhism and Anti-caste movements in North America
- Psychedelic Buddhism (please contact Colin Simonds, simonds@ualberta.ca)

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
- Caroline Starkey
c.starkey@leeds.ac.uk

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Buddhism Unit

Call for Proposals

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, institutional affiliation, 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).

Although everyone is welcome to submit a proposal for Individual Papers, we are prioritizing contributions by graduate students and/or postdocs. Roughly 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. Our Unit will be able to sponsor three 2-hour sessions and two 90-minute sessions and we gain an additional 2-hour session with co-sponsorship.

We welcome proposals on this year's Presidential Theme, "Freedom," or proposals that relate in some way to the location of the Annual Meeting (Boston, Massachusetts).

Below are some of the other 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.

- Teaching Buddhism in 2025 (Contact: Bryan Lowe, bdlowe@princeton.edu or Amy Langenberg, langenap@eckerd.edu)

The humanities, religion departments, and Buddhist Studies programs are all under threat as state legislators increasingly cut funding, politicians seek to interfere with liberal arts curricula, and students themselves struggle to grasp their value and relevance. How do we teach Buddhist Studies in this environment? This roundtable seeks participants from diverse perspectives, especially financially vulnerable institutions and/or those in states like Florida in which higher education is under legislative attack, who wish to triage Buddhist Studies pedagogy in 2025.

- Buddhist Materialities and Sensoriums (Contact: Ray Buckner, raybuckner@u.northwestern.edu)

This panel strives to explore the significance of Buddhist materials in the study of Buddhist lives. How do flowers, monastic robes, hair, and amulets, among other materials and objects, shape religious practice and devotion? How does touching objects or smelling them form new relations to the Buddhist path? This panel strives to bring together scholars from diverse methodological, regional, and temporal fields to discuss the centrality of Buddhist materialities and sensorium's in the study of Buddhism.

- Monastic Lineages: Rebirth, Karma, and Succession (Contact: Nicole Willock, nwillock@odu.edu)

Invites participants on a roundtable with pre-circulated short research papers to explore how succession works in different monastic institutions across varying Buddhist traditions in modern and contemporary period (from 19th century to now) with particular attention to the role of karma and rebirth, or the lack thereof.

- Buddhist Literature in a Comparative Frame (Contact: Adam Miller, atmiller0526@gmail.com)

Scholars of Buddhism increasingly employ highly contextualized readings that analyze Buddhist literature within the tradition and local, geographic context. This panel reverses this trend. It invites comparative approaches that put Buddhist literature in dialogue with other “texts”—including religious literature that emerged outside of Asia as well as non-religious media like film, fiction, and biography—in order to shed new light on Buddhist texts within a global comparative frame. Each paper would pair at least one Buddhist text with at least one non-Buddhist example.

- *Śāntideva and the Dynamics of Tradition* (Contacts: Dr. Stephen E. Harris and Prof. Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel, perrysl@uni-muenster.de, s.e.harris@phil.leidenuniv.nl)

Religions are neither static nor homogenous, but dynamic and multifaceted traditions driven by internal and external factors. The panel looks at Śāntideva’s widely acclaimed *Bodhicaryāvatāra* in relation to the dynamics of tradition. It focuses on three factors: (1) inner-Buddhist doctrinal dynamics, (2) social dynamics, (3) interreligious dynamics.

- [Sociology of Buddhism \(Contact: Di Di, \[ddi@scu.edu\]\(mailto:ddi@scu.edu\)\) \[possible co-sponsored session with Sociology of Religion Unit\]](#)

This possible co-sponsored session invites proposals focused on the sociology of Buddhism, including local or global studies, reflections on the state of the field, and more from scholars working across geographies, traditions, and practices. We seek original research using sociological methodologies, such as quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, historical sociology, and theoretical approaches.

- New Frontiers of Buddhism: Challenging Norms and Opening Doors (Contact: Dhondup T. Rekjong, dhonduptashi2025@u.northwestern.edu and Darcie Price-Wallace, darciepricewallace2021@u.northwestern.edu) [Possible co-sponsorship with Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit]

This roundtable discussion invites scholars in Buddhist Studies to explore areas of rapid transformation as Buddhism intersects with newly emerging practices and phenomena, such as online religion and developments in contemporary science. These and similar developments challenge the traditional norms of Buddhism long dominated by institutional, textual, and ritual frameworks and transcend conventional boundaries. Such interdisciplinary engagements create new opportunities for Buddhism to directly impact modern scientific and secular practices. We will examine the evolving frontiers of Buddhism, both by challenging established norms and by opening new doors for innovation and collaboration in a global context.

- Buddhist Environmental Ethics in Exemplarist Mode (Contact: Kathy Lin, nkl17@georgetown.edu; and Colin Simonds, simonds@ualberta.ca)

Recent work in religious ethics has highlighted the importance of thinking in an exemplarist mode – in the words of Alda Balthrop-Lewis, of narrating “what we admire in those we have long admired, in order to make them resonate with contemporary ethical needs.” The mode of narrating with admiration does not preclude critical commentary related to these same persons, but holds suspicious reading together with generosity in interpreting the lives and actions of real people who made the efforts they could, in the directions of possibility open to them. This panel thus seeks papers interested in narrating what we admire in the lives of Buddhists, past and present, who live(d) and act(ed) with implicit or explicit environmental concerns. In (re)narrating these ethical lives, this panel hopes to forward a set of examples that can inspire personal and social transformation in this crucial moment of climate emergency.

- What Can Sūtras Do? Narrative, Affectivity, and Ritual in Buddhism (Contact: Tiantian Cai, tcgai34@wisc.edu or Julian Butterfield, butterf@stanford.edu)

We aim to explore the diverse ways in which Buddhist sūtras engage their audiences, including the use of rhetorical devices, affective stimulation, and embodied

experiences. Additionally, we intend to incorporate the expertise of scholars specializing not only in various Buddhism but also in the transitions and developments associated with Buddhist thoughts.

- Adaptation, Incorporation, Conversion: Buddhist Strategies in Response to Transgression and Violence (Contact: Patrick Lambelet, p.lambelet@maitripa.org)

This panel aims to explore ways in which Buddhists have historically responded to elements of transgression in Buddhist doctrines and practices, including the use of violence and sexuality. We seek submissions covering a broad range of Buddhist traditions and methodologies, including textual, historical, anthropological, and ethnographic approaches.

- Neurodiversity, Disability, and Buddhist Meditation (Contact: Rory Tasker, rory.tasker@mail.utoronto.ca)

Recent research has discussed and documented the possible pitfalls of meditation practice for mental health. However, Buddhist meditation has also been adopted by neurodiverse and disability communities as a means of improving wellbeing and healing. According to emerging research, Buddhist meditation and mindfulness practice often have positive outcomes for neurodiverse and disabled individuals. This panel seeks to facilitate a discussion at the intersection of Buddhist and Disability Studies about experiences of meditation practice by these communities, and propose pathways for further research in this area.

- Buddhist Foodways (Contact: Paulina Kolata pkk@hum.ku.dk and Erica Baffelli erica.baffelli@manchester.ac.uk)

This roundtable on Buddhist foodways seeks to illuminate how food is produced, circulated, consumed, and disposed of across Buddhist networks and how, in turn, it enables and disrupts such networks. By focusing on Buddhist foodways and their local and trans-local trajectories, we seek short historically and ethnographically grounded reflections to understand not only how food can work to create spaces for articulation and understanding of religious values, but also how food stimulates and challenges

religious practices and discourses, and how it drives processes of marginalization and politicization across contemporary Buddhist contexts.

- Roundtable: New Works in Modern Indian Buddhisms (Contact: Upayadhi S. Luraschi, upayadhi@uchicago.edu)

This roundtable seeks to showcase and discuss recent works contributing to our understanding of Buddhist communities and movements in modern India. Attention is more typically granted to the pre-modern period of Indian Buddhism, with the still prevalent idea that the living tradition "all but disappeared" sometime in the 13th century. However, recent publications and scholarship shed new light on the multifacetedness of modern Buddhism in India, particularly from the 1830s and onwards. We invite authors of such works (recently published or soon to be) to share their key findings, as well as to engage with one another on the panel about the state of the field, methodological challenges and future lines of inquiry.

- [Encountering Buddha in Museums: Modern Expressions of an Ancient Tradition](#) (Contacts: Aik Sai Goh, aiksai@virginia.edu or Stephanie Bell, sab2346@columbia.edu) [Possible co-sponsorship with Space, Place, and Religion Unit]

Since the establishment of the first Buddhist museums by British colonial administrators in Bagan, Myanmar (1904), and Sarnath, India (1908), to house archaeological finds, the world has seen an explosion of Buddhist exhibitions and museums. This session seeks to understand this phenomenon in its broadest form—exhibitions, galleries, museumified temples, cultural parks, or temple-museums—and ask what these tell us about the confluence of the modern museological form and an ancient tradition. In what ways do Buddhist museums and exhibitions illustrate the changing attitudes towards the religion? How do these places interpret Buddhism and what impacts do these interpretations have on the beliefs and practices of Buddhism?

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

- Bryan Lowe, Princeton University
bdlowe@princeton.edu
- Amy P. Langenberg, Eckerd College
langenap@eckerd.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Buddhism Unit

Call for Proposals

The Buddhism Unit would like to sponsor a session for the online meeting in June. Any and all topics are welcome. Below are some of the themes that our members have proposed explicitly with a preference for the online 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.

- Roundtable: New Works in Modern Indian Buddhisms (Contact: Upayadhi S. Luraschi, upayadhi@uchicago.edu)

This roundtable seeks to showcase and discuss recent works contributing to our understanding of Buddhist communities and movements in modern India. Attention is more typically granted to the pre-modern period of Indian Buddhism, with the still prevalent idea that the living tradition "all but disappeared" sometime in the 13th century. However, recent publications and scholarship shed new light on the multifacetedness of modern Buddhism in India, particularly from the 1830s and onwards. We invite authors of such works (recently published or soon to be) to share their key findings, as well as to engage with one another on the panel about the state of the field, methodological challenges and future lines of inquiry. We are aiming for the online session of AAR in June, in order to facilitate greater engagement from scholars who might not easily travel to Boston in November 2025, in particular those based in India.

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

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Chairs

- Bryan Lowe, Princeton University
bdlowe@princeton.edu
- Amy P. Langenberg, Eckerd College
langenap@eckerd.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 meeting, Freedom. The steering committee wishes to specifically encourage new and emerging scholars to submit individual paper proposals around this theme as it relates to Buddhist concepts of liberation and awakening, whether practically, ritually, materially, politically, philosophically, or otherwise, as we look to find opportunities to support the work of scholars not already well-connected in the field of Buddhist Studies.

We likewise invite individual paper proposals that might contribute to scholarly conversation around 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.

[Buddhism, chaplaincy, and spiritual care](#)

For potential co-sponsorship with the Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit and the Buddhism in the West Unit. Panel, roundtable, or paper proposals welcome, related broadly to intersections of Buddhist thought, practice, communities, texts, and research methods with pastoral theories, professional practices, and contexts of spiritual care/chaplaincy, or specifically, Buddhist traditional and secularized practices and texts that demonstrably benefit chaplains and their care recipients.

Contact: Leigh Miller, program@maitripa.org

Buddhist ethics and responses, collective and individual, to state violence in Gaza

Contact: Rima Vesely-Flad (rv3282@princeton.edu)

[Buddhist philosophy of *isonomia* \(no-rule\)](#)

For potential co-sponsorship with the Buddhist Philosophy Unit. Exploring Buddhist theories (historical & contemporary) of freedom from any ruler-ruled thought-behavioral patterns, social/institutional arrangements, and material manifestations.

Contact: Jessica Zu (xzu@usc.edu)

Buddhist responses to the advancements of sciences

Exploring the capacity of Buddhist theories and practices to engage with modern sciences, including in such domains as climate science; debates around mind, consciousness, and personhood; medical research and human evolution; Artificial Intelligence; and quantum mechanics.

Contact: Allan Furic (A.V.B.Furic@sms.ed.ac.uk)

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
- Melissa Anne-Marie Curley
curley.32@osu.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

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We likewise invite individual paper proposals that might contribute to scholarly conversation around themes that our members have suggested, as indicated below; for the June meeting, we hope to take advantage of the affordances of the online meeting particularly to bring together scholars working internationally. 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.

Buddhism, chaplaincy, and spiritual care

For potential co-sponsorship with the Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit and the Buddhism in the West Unit. Panel, roundtable, or paper proposals welcome, related broadly to intersections of Buddhist thought, practice, communities, texts, and

research methods with pastoral theories, professional practices, and contexts of spiritual care/chaplaincy, or specifically, Buddhist traditional and secularized practices and texts that demonstrably benefit chaplains and their care recipients.

Contact: Leigh Miller (program@maitripa.org)

Buddhist ethics and responses, collective and individual, to the Gaza War

Contact: Rima Vesely-Flad (rv3282@princeton.edu)

Buddhist philosophy of *isonomia* (no-rule)

For potential co-sponsorship with the Buddhist Philosophy Unit. Exploring Buddhist theories (historical & contemporary) of freedom from any ruler-ruled thought-behavioral patterns, social/institutional arrangements, and material manifestations.

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Chairs

- Barbra R. Clayton, Mount Allison University
bclayton@mta.ca
- Melissa Anne-Marie Curley
curley.32@osu.edu

Buddhist Philosophy Unit

Call for Proposals

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 Connie Kassor (constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu) or Cat Prueitt (catherine.prueitt@ubc.ca) 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:

- Buddhist philosophy in the age of AI - Connie Kassor
constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu
- The Virtue of Humility and Politics – Pierre-Julien Harter pjharter@unm.edu
- Buddhism and the more-than-human world – Karin Meyers
karin.l.meyers@gmail.com
- Metaphysics and Buddhist philosophy – Pierre-Julien Harter pjharter@unm.edu
- Public-facing Buddhist philosophy – Connie Kassor
constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu
- Weaponized karma – Rima Vesely-Flad rimavesely@gmail.com
- Bondage and freedom in Buddhist philosophy – Karin Meyers
karin.l.meyers@gmail.com
- Applied Buddhist Philosophy, enacted and embodied in Buddhist care contexts (co-sponsor with Chaplaincy Unit) – Leigh Miller program@maitripa.org
- Buddhist philosophy and anarchy – Jessica Zu xzu@usc.edu
- Phenomenology and Buddhist Philosophy – Zach Joachim
joachimz@denison.edu
- Moral and Epistemological dimensions of truth and truth-telling – Sara McClintock slmcli@emory.edu
- Buddhist Philosophy of Time – Bob Scharf rsharp@berkeley.edu
- Yogacara in Tibetan Madhyamaka – Seth Auster-Rosen
sethausterrosen@uchicago.edu
- Text reading – Amber Carpenter amber.carpenter@kcl.ac.uk

Other proposed topics with no point-person specified. If you would like to organize a proposal for one of these panels, please email Connie and Cat as soon as possible.

- Dogen and philosophy
- Buddhist philosophy and cinema / Affect theory and aesthetics
- Buddhist and African Philosophy
- New Work on Shantideva
- [Roundtable on Jed Forman's new book, *Out of Sight, Into Mind*](#)
- Buddhist futurism

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, if known, 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

- Catherine Prueitt, University of British Columbia
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- Constance Kassor
constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Catholic Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 meeting in Boston, MA.

Teaching with Catholic Objects

What makes an object “Catholic” and “pedagogical”? This session will feature 8-10 panelists, each offering a short (5 minute) presentation featuring a single Catholic object with which they have had special success in a pedagogical setting. Proposals

should describe the object and offer a summary of its power as a tool for teaching about Catholics and Catholicism.

Catholics and Boston Busing, 50 Years Later

2025 marks approximately fifty years since Boston's most intense period of protest and controversy around the state's plan for school integration, commonly known as "busing." Catholics were deeply enmeshed in the controversy. With a half-century's distance, Catholic Studies calls for proposals that revisit this history, with an eye on Catholics' involvement and influence, both official and lay, both overt and subtle. Topics might include: lay Catholic anti-busing activism; lay Catholic pro-integration activism (for example, the Interracial Council); Black Catholics' voice and activity; official archdiocesan policies around Catholic schools as segregated "havens"; consequences and lingering effects of the events for Catholics and Catholicism in the city, etc.

The Global Politics of the New "Counter-Cultural" Catholicism

Recent decades have witnessed the rise, in many countries around the world, of a Catholic political class presenting themselves as "counter-cultural." Drawing on the examples of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI as well as a certain interpretation of Catholic Social Teaching advanced by the likes of Patrick J. Deneen, these leaders have built successful coalitions by aligning themselves with ideals formerly labeled "conservative," such as "family," "community," and "tradition." At the same time, they position themselves as a haven, a safe harbor for those alienated by a wider culture of wokeness, open borders, sexual libertinism, abortion on demand, and gender fluidity. Catholic Studies seeks proposals exploring this rising Catholic political class in various locales around the world.

Catholicism in Asia

The Catholic Studies Unit seeks proposals that will continue its recent series of sessions on Catholicism in Asia. We invite full session proposals in addition to individual papers. Creative proposals—experiments with method, topic, comparison, etc.—are welcome.

Medieval Catholicism

The Catholic Studies Unit seeks proposals in the area of medieval Catholic history and theology. We especially welcome considerations of medieval studies' relation to Catholic Studies. Are Medievalists doing Catholic Studies? What should Catholic Studies scholars know about the Middle Ages? For example, medieval ideas about "self"

and “other” were far more “fluid” with medieval communities shaped by an understanding that human bodies were a microcosm of the universe (the cosmos) while also concretely permeable by blood, breast milk, semen, and the body and blood of Christ. How do historical, literary, and theological explorations of medieval connectivity and fragmentation offer new directions for the field of Catholic Studies?

[Religion and Reproductive Politics](#)

Catholic Studies, in potential collaboration with the North American Religions Unit, seeks proposals for a session on religion and access to healthcare, including access to reproductive care in light of the U.S. election of 2024.

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

- John Seitz, Fordham University
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- J. Michelle Molina, Northwestern University
molina@northwestern.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Childhood Studies and Religion Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

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 2025 AAR Annual Meeting, we hope to organize sessions around one or more of the following topics:

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?

Liberating Childhoods

How do we prioritize the rights of children in public policy and religion? What does a liberative childhood look like across the globe? How has childhood advocacy been represented historically, theoretically, and practically in religious studies?

[Queer and Trans Studies in Religion & Childhood - Co-Sponsored](#)

For a potential co-sponsored session with the Queer Theory Unit, we invite proposals at the intersection of queer and trans studies in religion and childhood. This may include queer, trans, and gender-non-conforming youth in historic and contemporary religious studies; revisiting “the figure of the child” and futurity in queer theories; trans youths, public and/or healthcare policy, and religion; the child, religion, and popular culture; anti-/blackness and the queer and/or trans child; trans minors and the *United States v. Skrimetti* case; other topics that take seriously the role of religion in queer and trans childhood.

Additional Opportunities

If you are interested in proposing a session that is not listed above, we welcome panel and roundtable proposals especially related to childhood and immigration. 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.

[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

- Kishundra King, Iliff School of Theology
kking@iliff.edu
- Rode Molla, Virginia Theological Seminary
rode.molla@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Chinese Christianities Unit

Call for Proposals

The Chinese Christianities Unit at the American Academy of Religion invites papers for the 2025 Annual Meeting that speak to the ten-year anniversary of our unit.

Ten years ago, 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.

For our ten year anniversary, we seek proposals for state of the field panels and collaborations with other groups, especially the Chinese Religions Unit. In particular, we would welcome papers that focus on the following topics:

- Chinese Christianities and the changing geopolitics of mainland and diasporic Christianities, as well as the diversity of Sinophone languages
- the differentiations and convergences between Chinese Christianities and World Christianities as fields of study
- the place of the Bible and biblical studies in Chinese Christianities as an academic field
- field-wide reflections on gender and the place of women in Chinese Christianities
- the relationship Chinese Christianities as an academic field with new formations of "Sino-Christian" theologies and "Sino-theologies"
- field-wide reflections on interreligious dialogue, migration, and contextual theologies and spiritualities

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

- Easten Law, Princeton Theological Seminary
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- Stephanie Wong
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Chinese Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 Annual Meeting of the AAR, the presidential theme is freedom, 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:

- "I've Got the Power: Religious Expressions of Power in Medieval China," Yuxuan Tay yuxuantay@g.ucla.edu
- [East Asian Self-Cultivation Practices in Transnational Perspective](#), Justin Stein justin.stein@kpu.ca
- Spirit Mediums in Chinese religions, Haoran Ke kehaoran@connect.hku.hk
- Emotive Facets of Chinese Religious Life, Paul Katz mhprkatz@gate.sinica.edu.tw
- New Directions in the Study of Early Chinese Religion, Matthew Duperon duperon@susqu.edu
- Masculinities and Chinese religions, Megan Bryson mbryson4@utk.edu

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

- Rongdao Lai, McGill University
rongdao.lai@mcgill.ca
- Susan Andrews
sandrews@mta.ca

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Christian Spirituality Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

1. Selling Spirituality/Commodifying Wellness: Holding Paradoxical Perspectives.

There is a growing awareness and interest in spirituality across many different groups and in late capitalism this results in high prices for spiritual retreats, wellness, and other forms of "well-being." What is gained in this increasing popularity? What should we be wary about? What does Christian spirituality have to contribute to assess the increasing commodification of wellness in its many forms of expression?

Another way of critically examining this issue is by assessing the use of "prayer apps." Prayer apps are flooding the market and provide a lucrative investment for big business. But what is their true impact on Christian Spirituality? Are they facilitating an awakening to life in Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit or are they drawing people into privatized "stress-free zones" isolated from community, which, paradoxically, elevate the stress and restlessness they are meant to counter?

2. Spirituality and Themes of Rest.

According to Christian spirituality, rest is not simply what we do so that we can work harder and be more productive. Rest is an end in and of itself and is a natural limit, even embraced by God. How is rest something counter-cultural and how can it be re-discovered in contemporary and rest-less times to contribute to human flourishing on all levels?

3. Spirituality, Freedom, and Resistance.

Christian spirituality plays a crucial role in opposing injustices of all kinds through non-violent resistance, conflict management and the exposure of systematic oppression on multiple levels. By exploring how spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation and fasting can support resistance to oppression and commitment to justice, this topic invites the analysis of the lives of historical and contemporary figures or groups, such as Itzhar Morrar, the Rosenstrasse Group, Truus Wijsmuller, Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King Jr. and Desmond Tutu, who used their faith to promote peace and justice against all odds. Conflict brings suffering and hardship, but it can also become an opportunity to reflect on the challenges of the world, and to transform oneself and one's community into an opportunity to live differently, that is, to live in freedom. What, in the end, is the lived meaning of freedom?

4. Modalities of Sacrifice.

The philosopher René Girard likened religious sacrifice to a form of "pure violence" that averts "impure violence": rituals of purification, for example, sanctify deep, aggressive impulses, with Christ's sacrifice serving as the ultimate example. In our current era, ecological crises and the crisis of excessive consumption raise anew, with heightened urgency, questions about the place of sacrifice and asceticism of all forms. Given the reality of overconsumption and waste, a Christian eco-spirituality of personal sacrifice or asceticism makes good sense and is indeed necessary.

But given the histories of Christian theological reflection on sacrifice, especially as something that can be used and abused (as feminist and womanist theologians, as well as scholars of race and class have noted), how should Christian spiritual and theological reflection speak of sacrifice and asceticism? Might Christian spirituality help us both understand and live into the sacrifices our ecological, social, and cultural moment seems to demand? What good can come from a Christian spirituality of sacrifice and asceticism?

5. The Study of Spirituality: Whose Imagination? Which Methodology?

Since the formal foundation of the academic study of Christian spirituality, methodological questions have remained crucial for the guidance of research in the discipline. Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in this topic: What kind of "imaginary" should spirituality draw on for an understanding of its basic parameters of inquiry? How do different methodological starting points impact the discipline's self-understanding?

Suggestions for foundations include the appropriation of Bernard Lonergan's notion of "authentic subjectivity," the philosophical tradition of the American pragmatists, and the philosophical hermeneutical approach of Paul Ricoeur. This session calls for creative proposals and evaluations regarding foundations and inspirations for the methodology of Christian spirituality.

[6. Mysticism, Inter-Spirituality, and Multiple Religious Belonging co-sponsored with the Mysticism Unit](#)

"Inter-spirituality" and "multiple religious belonging" are categories that scholars utilize to describe individuals and communities that lie beyond the borders and boundaries of traditional religious affiliation or identification. This panel invites papers that investigate the relationship between mysticism and inter-religious, inter-monastic, and/or "multiple" religious identification(s). Proposals can include recent trends and contemporary inter-spiritual mystics or movements, as well as past examples of persons or communities who embody or exemplify multiple or religious cross-identification based upon their own mystical experience or *praxis*.

Sample topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Apophatic and cataphatic approaches to inter-spirituality/multiple religious belonging
- "Universal" and "perennial" currents: methodological concerns and lived *praxis*
- Mystical transgressions across religious borders: Sufi Mystics; Ramakrishna
- Bede Griffiths, Swami Abhishiktananda, and Hindu-Christian dialogue
- "New monasticism" and inter-spirituality
- Synthesis vs. syncretism

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.

Chairs

- Beringia Zen
beringia.zen@avera.org
- David B. Perrin, St. Jerome's University
dperrin@uwaterloo.ca

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Christian Spirituality Unit

Call for Proposals

1. Spirituality and Organizational Change. There is a great concern and growing distrust of institutions around the globe. What do Christian spiritual perspectives have to say about this? What role do institutions, both faith-based and secular, have in this time and how might our spiritualities inform our approaches to institutions and organizational change? How does spirituality transform the goals and purposes of our institutions?
2. Book Response Panel: Author-meets-critics. Proposals are invited to critique a recently published book relevant to the discipline or an edited volume that covers the work of a scholar or scholars. The AAR norms for the proposal of a "Roundtable Session" or "New Paper Session" that considers a particular book must be followed to be considered for this session of 75 minutes.

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.

Chairs

- Beringia Zen
beringia.zen@avera.org
- David B. Perrin, St. Jerome's University
dperrin@uwaterloo.ca

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Christian Systematic Theology Unit

Call for Proposals

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 the presidential topic of freedom, for example:

- Divine and human freedom
- Agency and personhood in human and nonhuman creatures
- Creaturely freedom under conditions of givenness, finitude, fallenness, and structural sin
- Bondage vs. freedom of the will historically and eschatologically
- The Holy Spirit - spirit of freedom?

- Different theological conceptions of "freedom for/to" (such as freedom to love) and "freedom from" (such as Augustine's ultimate freedom not to sin)
- Authority and freedom in theological method, e.g. in relation to scripture, doctrine, and reason
- Divine and political sovereignty, theological accounts of democracy and political freedom, obedience, and rights to resistance
- Theological accounts of, engagements with, and critiques of "freedom's others": sin, bondage, enslavement, forced labor, forced migration, human trafficking, imprisonment, exclusion, and other forms of unfreedom
- Freedom engendered and limited by creeds and confessions, upon its 1700th anniversary especially considering the Nicene creed, its imperial context of origination, ecumenical reach, and ongoing significance
- Freedom and Liberation, especially in the theologies of Juergen Moltmann and Gustavo Gutierrez of blessed memory
- Freedom in the Christian life
- Theologies of worship and liturgy as laboratories of freedom

[In collaboration between the Christian Systematic Theology unit, the Schleiermacher, Modernity, and Religion unit and the Reformed Theology and History unit, we especially invite proposals on:](#)

- Freedom in modern theology, especially in and around Friedrich Schleiermacher and 19th century Liberal Theology and its alternatives

Statement of Purpose

This Unit promotes 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

- Hanna Reichel, Princeton Theological Seminary
hanna.reichel@ptsem.edu
- Natalia Marandiuc, United Lutheran Seminary
nmarandiuc@uls.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Class, Labor, and Religion Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

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, or worker issues in religious communities and traditions or the significance of class, labor, or 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:

- Reproductive labor(s) and/or the relationships between economic production and reproductive labor;
- Relationships between structures of violence and of 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 on Evangelicals and labor](#): For a co-sponsored session with the Evangelical Studies unit, we invite responses to Ken Estey's recently published book *Labor Evangelicals: Faith, Authority, and Resistance at Work* (Palgrave, 2024) or papers examining working-class evangelicals' theo-ethical perspectives on or engagement with work, unions, class, and/or workplace power.

[Co-sponsored session with the Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty Committee \(ALCF\)](#): For a co-sponsored session with ALCF, we invite papers addressing any aspect

of contingent faculty experiences or academic labor more generally. In addition, we invite papers that (a) engage the Deepak Bhargava and Stephanie Luce's recent book *Practical Radicals: Seven Strategies to Change the World* (New Press, 2023) or other change strategies for academic labor; or (b) consider the "enrollment cliff" and its consequences for academic institutions and labor.

Statement of Purpose

This unit fosters engagement in the study of religion with issues of class, labor, and workers. We embrace diverse methods of religious and/or theological studies to demonstrate how consideration of class, labor, and workers leads to more complex understandings of religious communities and traditions and vice-versa. We understand labor as both economic production and the labor of reproducing society, daily and intergenerationally, upon which economic production depends, and we understand class fundamentally in terms of unequal power within structures and processes of labor, which compels many to work just to survive. Moreover, labor and class are shaped by their intersections with racism, patriarchy, colonialism, nationalism, hetero- and cis-normativity, ableism, and other inequalities of power. Thus, we aim to examine classes in relationship to each other through such inequalities of power and not reduce class to income or consumption inequality by itself.

Chairs

- Kerry Danner
kerry.danner@georgetown.edu
- Jeremy Posadas, Stetson University
prof.posadas@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Class, Labor, and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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, or worker issues in religious communities and traditions or the significance of class, labor, or 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:

- Reproductive labor(s) and/or the relationships between economic production and reproductive labor;
- Relationships between structures of violence and of 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 fosters engagement in the study of religion with issues of class, labor, and workers. We embrace diverse methods of religious and/or theological studies to demonstrate how consideration of class, labor, and workers leads to more complex understandings of religious communities and traditions and vice-versa. We understand labor as both economic production and the labor of reproducing society, daily and intergenerationally, upon which economic production depends, and we understand class fundamentally in terms of unequal power within structures and processes of labor, which compels many to work just to survive. Moreover, labor and class are shaped by their intersections with racism, patriarchy, colonialism, nationalism, hetero- and cis-normativity, ableism, and other inequalities of power. Thus, we aim to examine classes in relationship to each other through such inequalities of power and not reduce class to income or consumption inequality by itself.

Chairs

- Kerry Danner
kerry.danner@georgetown.edu
- Jeremy Posadas, Stetson University
prof.posadas@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Cognitive Science of Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 AAR-CSR Unit's sessions.

4E Cognitive Approaches to Religious Phenomena

This past year, the CSR unit hosted a massively successful roundtable on 4E cognition and CSR. Back by popular demand, we are requesting further scholarship in this area. 4E describes cognition as embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended, complicating clear divisions between mind and world. 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.

[Contemplative Studies and CSR. CO-SPONSORED by the Contemplative Studies Unit.](#)

From its earliest inception, contemplative studies has relied on cognitive science methodologies to more deeply investigate the phenomena of contemplative practices across traditions. There has been less scholarship, however, exploring intersections between contemplative studies and the subfield of cognitive science of religion specifically. This call invites new scholarship focusing on such intersections. Paper or panel proposals could include applied CSR to contemplative traditions, methodological analyses of how CSR and contemplative studies might be mutually informative, or any other work that topically concerns CSR and contemplative studies.

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
- Paul Robertson, University of New Hampshire
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Collective Karma and Karmic Collectives: Conversations without Borders Seminar

Call for Proposals

Year three–Karmic theories and bio-social imaginations

We invite panels and papers that inquire into how marginalized groups: (1) employ karma cluster concepts to argue for and bring forth a free, equitable, and complex society, and (2) theorize agency for humans, animals, and other more-than-human actors. We particularly encourage presentations that showcase how these karma-

informed social imaginations, from the ground up, enrich, nuance, and/or potentially change the terms of debate in existing conversations about freedom, equity, and justice.

More specifically, the following are themes proposed during our business meeting at AAR 2024. Please email the designated contact person for the theme(s) you are interested in.

- What is karma: from the philosophical to the quotidian, from premodern to modern. This panel looks at how practitioners understand karma and how those who theorize about it advocate for the adoption of their particular doctrinal views (Jennifer EICHMAN, jennifer.eichman@gmail.com)
- Karma and affect: More than merit-making. Many scholars have written that practices done to generate merit function as a transactional instrument for the alleviation of suffering. Because I do X, I get Y. But when our analyses shift from a purely instrumental register to an emotional register, we often discover that there is a much greater nexus of ideas attached to this process and to how people understood karma. Has thinking about karma generated empathy? Anger? Commitment? Shame? (Jennifer EICHMAN, jennifer.eichman@gmail.com)
- Karma, free will, agency (point person?)
- Practices of collective karma (Jessica Zu, xzu@usc.edu)
- Nonhuman karmic collectives (Susanne Kerekes, susanne.kerekes@trincoll.edu)
- Workshop panel for past presenters' publication (Jessica Zu, xzu@usc.edu). This panel will be a closed session, only open to participants, chairs, and steering committee members. It offers a space for polishing one's past presentations into a special issue (if enough papers cohere around a theme) or individual journal articles. Papers must be pre-circulated.

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) and Susanne Kerekes (susanne.kerekes@trincoll.edu)

Statement of Purpose

Mission Statement

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

- Jessica Zu, University of Southern California
pureoneness@gmail.com
- Susanne Kerekes, Skidmore College
skerekes@trincoll.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Colloquium on Violence and Religion

Call for Proposals

The Colloquium on Violence & Religion welcomes both individual paper proposals and panel proposals addressed to the following topics:

- Proposals that explore how mimetic theory interacts with climate change
- Proposals that respond to the newest documentary, *Things Hidden: The Life and Legacy of René Girard*
- 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
kingc2@sacredheart.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

CARV invites individual papers and pre-organized panels that critically examine any aspect of the nexus between religion and violence. In particular, our unit encourages work that explores how religion and violence mediate this year's presidential theme of freedom.

While all submissions will be considered, CARV maintains an active interest in two specific areas this year.

(1) Entangled Freedoms, Religion, and Violence

"Entanglement" now saturates the pages of articles and monographs across disciplines, usually signifying alternate (and more terrestrially attuned) ontologies to the A=A of Western (Aristotelian and Abrahamic) notions of identity grounded in Being (or a Being). Whether from the works of New Materialists, proponents of Actor Network Theory, cyberneticists, Earth and life scientists (ecologists, micro-biologists, and Earth system scientists especially), eco-feminists, and/or Indigenous thought and praxis (from which many theorists draw their examples and inspiration), re-orienting to the fundamental reality of "entanglement" in its varied iterations is presented as the *sine qua non* for "living well together," including non-human species. In ontologies of entanglement, the valence of "freedom" shifts toward relationality, obligations, de-centered and distributed agency, and circularity—a far cry from libertarian notions of "freedom" that permeate much public discourse and activism in the West.

CARV's interest in entanglement scholarship focuses on how its diverse conceptions of freedom emerge from—or threaten to devolve into—violence, broadly defined (theological, philosophical, polemical, political, bureaucratic, etc.). This includes reactionary violence committed by proponents of traditional Western ontologies, who may find entangled ontologies threatening.

With this in mind, CARV invites papers that:

- interrogate/elucidate the varied meanings of "freedom" purveyed in ontologies of entanglement, and the relations of such meanings with religious ideas (theism/s, atheism/s, animism/s, etc.);
- examine political presuppositions and (speculative and/or real) consequences of entanglement as a political model on multiple scales, with a focus on individual/collective freedoms;

- locate (proto-)ontologies of entanglement within the history of Western philosophy and religious thought and assess notions of freedom in light of contemporary discourses on entanglement;
- assess the status of Indigenous thought and praxis in contemporary ontologies of entanglement, whether as exemplary, as ignored, or otherwise, and evaluate notions of “freedom” in light of neo-colonial and/or decolonizing practices in academe and beyond;
- explore trajectories of “New Animism” in Religious Studies, its impact on discourses of entanglement, and its contrast with modernist theorizing about animism as a retrograde phase of humanity on its path to rational freedom; and
- other topics that engage discourses of entanglement and freedom.

(2) Religion, Revolution, Revenge

In the last decade, we have witnessed large-scale progressive social movements calling for greater freedoms that, within months or years, resulted in intensified authoritarian policies and state violence, whether in Turkey, Iran, Brazil (under Bolsonaro), Hong Kong, Egypt, among others. These “failed revolutions” of the 2010s—staged under the banners of freedom, democracy, and social justice—seem to bode ill for future protest movements even within democratic regimes, as the lurch rightward across the global North continues apace. What can these recent failures teach us about the prospects for future large-scale dissent in democratic and/or authoritarian regimes? What role/s might religion play in the impact of progressive protest movements grounded in calls for greater freedom (for women, from police violence, for economic, racial, or climate justice, etc.)? What reactionary or supportive roles did “religion” play (or not) in recent failed social movements, and how did this participation influence the outcome?

Put differently: what happens when pathways to freedom trigger calls for revenge? And what happens when revenge becomes legitimated as a political tactic in the throes or wake of civil war?

Religious studies is attuned to the many ways in which “revenge” has been expressed and made conscionable and/or ethically sustainable by religious traditions. As a way to address past wrongs and create pathways to justice, “revenge” is often seen to be a necessary tactic, albeit one often framed as a short-term measure meant to eventually cede to less violent avenues of political and societal repair.

CARV warmly invites proposals that unpack these and related themes. It particularly wishes to feature a diversity of topical and methodological approaches.

[CO-SPONSORSHIP](#)-["Freedom By Another Name: Medicine & Healing in the Era of Slavery,"](#)

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

- Chase L. Way, Other
chase.laurelle.way@gmail.com
- W Miller
fmiller@ucdavis.edu

Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit

Call for Proposals

CARV invites papers that critically examine any aspect of the nexus between religion and violence. In particular, our unit encourages work that explores how religion and violence mediate this year's presidential theme of freedom.

Potential areas of inquiry include, but are not limited to:

- How religion shapes shifting boundaries between the categories of “terrorist” and “freedom fighter” across the globe.
- How media, political, and social elites weaponize religious narratives, themes, and cultural capital to invite and/or justify violence against free democratic institutions (e.g., the Capitol), texts (e.g., the Constitution), processes (e.g., voting, presidential debates), data reception (e.g., acceptance of election results), and representatives of democracy (e.g., state attorney generals, volunteer election workers, etc.).
- How religion shapes popular ideas about the legitimacy of violent acts that occur during, or co-occur during or shortly after, protests executed in the name of freedom.
 - For example, conservative commentators frequently celebrate the perpetrators of the January 6th insurrection as “patriots” and “political prisoners” who were engaged in viable forms of “protest,” while they frame progressive activists as divisive “social justice warriors” and “rioters” (even if, as is true in most cases, progressive activists commit no violence).

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

- Chase L. Way, Other
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Comparative Religious Ethics Unit

Call for Proposals

In keeping with the 2025 presidential theme of “freedom,” the Comparative Religious Ethics Unit seeks proposals from scholars representing a wide range of disciplines and subfields of religion to address questions relating to ethical aspects of freedom in a comparative context. We interpret “comparison” broadly to include any inquiry that brings together diverse examples, cases, concepts, traditions, etc., for analysis; we also invite both descriptive and constructive studies.

We welcome proposals on any topic related to comparative religious ethics. Topics and themes on which we especially encourage proposals include:

- Liberation: How is liberation interpreted in various religious and moral contexts? What are some of the various forms liberation theology takes? What role does the concept of liberation play in religiously motivated ethical reflection and activism?

- Reproductive freedom: What kinds of religious and/or ethical arguments are being made in favor of reproductive freedom? How does the concept of freedom itself play a significant role in arguments for access to abortion and other reproductive care? How are religious communities and activists responding to the *Dobbs* ruling?
- Freedom and non-humans: What resources does comparative ethics have to offer to emerging questions around freedom for non-humans (including other animal species, plant species, and/or future artificially intelligent beings)? How are specific religious communities addressing these questions in the context of environmental ethics, bioethics, technology ethics, or other conversations?

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
dunns@gonzaga.edu
- Rosemary Kellison, University of West Georgia
rmb07@fsu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Comparative Studies in Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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

Freedom and/as Constraint in Hagiological Sources, Christopher Jensen,
christopherjensen@cunet.carleton.ca

In keeping with the 2025 AAR conference theme, this panel aims to explore the concept of freedom as it pertains to saints and other exemplars. When such figures behave in ways that seem antisocial, idiosyncratic, or even "mad", what does this freedom mean and what is it constrained by? Is freedom a meaningful category for discussing hagiological sources (life narratives, songs / poems, visual art)? Preference will be given to submissions that are either explicitly comparative (internally) or whose authors

would be interested in engaging in a collaborative writing/editing process with other panelists.

Religion and the Astronaut Experience, Ben Overmeire,
ben.van.overmeire@dukekunshan.edu.cn

Astronauts sometimes report life-changing experiences in Outer Space. Known as the "Overview Effect," such experiences have been understood by the scholar Thore Bjornvig as mystical experiences. The application of this comparative category to make sense of what happens to individuals in outer space opens up vistas of further possibilities: what other tools can religious studies offer to understand what happens to individuals in outer space. Potential topics include religious ritual in outer space (e.g. icon worship by cosmonauts), close-readings of astronaut autobiographies utilizing tools from religious studies, and so on.

Love of Neighbor in Dialogue Across Religions, Yudit Greenberg, ygreenberg@rollins.edu

This session explores the concept of "Love of Neighbor" as a fundamental ethical and spiritual principle across religious traditions. Through a comparative analysis, panelists will examine how this idea(l) is articulated in the sacred texts of their respective traditions and the specific practices that exemplify and embody it. Questions to be addressed include: Who is considered a "neighbor"? What obligations does this love entail? And what historical, cultural, and social contexts influence the interpretations and practices of this ideal.

Comparison in AI, David Schones, dschones@austincollege.edu

Artificial intelligence has a growing presence in many cultural contexts, including the field of Religious Studies. This panel will explore how AI impacts the study of religious texts, traditions, and the comparisons made between different religious communities. By exploring how scholars analyze different traditions using AI, understand or conceptualize AI within these traditions, or even incorporate AI in classroom learning, this panel hopes to explore how comparative study of religion can deepen our understanding of the complexities surrounding AI, both as a focus of scholarly analysis and as a pedagogical tool.

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.

Chairs

- David Schones
dschones@austincollege.edu
- Yudit K. Greenberg, Rollins College
ygreenberg@rollins.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Comparative Theology Unit

Call for Proposals

The Comparative Theology Unit of the AAR seeks proposals on the following topics for its session at the 2025 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.

The CT 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 (takacsax@shu.edu).

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Themes

- Comparative Eco-Theologies (Contact Katie Mahowski Mylroie, Mahowskm@bc.edu)
- Authority, Normativity, and Comparative Theology – Why do we believe what we believe?: Sources of Normativity/Authority across Traditions; seeking comparative theological exploration on how various traditions exercise authority regarding normative claims (Contact Thomas Cattoi, tcattoi@pust.it)
- New Frontiers in Comparative Theology – seeking proposals regarding art, aesthetics, ascetical practices, ritual, embodiment, or indigenous/land-based theologies/axiologies (Contact James Farwell, Jfarwell@vts.edu)
- Constructive Postcolonial/Decolonial Comparative Theology – the postcolonial critiques of comparative theology now demand a constructive response for how to do comparative theology with attention to postcolonial/decolonial theologies (Contact Catherine Cornille, cornille@bc.edu or Axel Takacs, takacsax@shu.edu)
- Comparative Disability Theologies – seeking proposals for disability theologies in comparison, relevant to the AAR theme of “Freedom”, though not necessarily (Contact Megan Hopkins, hopkinma@bc.edu or Axel Takacs, takacsax@shu.edu)
- Comparative theologies of liberation / liberation theologies (contact Jason Welle, wellej@bc.edu)
- Comparative theology and Protestant traditions – exploring hermeneutical, historical and theological questions. What are the Protestant approaches to Comparative theology? What are unique theological challenges to the method? (Contact Domenik Ackermann, domenik.ackermann@uni-paderborn.de)
- Human Agency, Divine Agency, and Free Will – given the conference theme of Freedom, exercises in comparative theology around questions of free will, human agency, divine agency, etc. (contact Kalpesh Bhatt, kbhatt@umw.edu)
- Comparative Theologies engaging marginalized religions (contact Shin Jae Lee, leeaqj@bc.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. However, 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, race, disability, nationality, and/or academic status (graduate student, senior scholar, etc.).

The CT Unit seeks to provide opportunities for constructive/confessional or meta-confessional theological proposals from various traditions. If appropriate, proposals should be forthright about the author's religious tradition, i.e., whether they are writing as a Buddhist, or as a Muslim, or as a Hindu, et cetera (or some other hybrid identity).

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 (takacsax@shu.edu)

Chairs

- Martha L. Moore-Keish, Columbia Theological Seminary
keishm@ctsnet.edu
- Axel Marc Oaks Takacs, Seton Hall University
takacsax@shu.edu

Confucian Traditions Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025:

- Tu Wei-ming and third-wave (Worldwide) Confucianism. Contact: Young Chan Ro (George Mason University yro@gmu.edu).
- Defining Confucianism: A Roundtable Discussion, to investigate the meaning of "Confucianism" or "Ruism" in its varying meanings, histories, and social contexts. Contact: Stephanie Balkwill (UCLA balkwill@humnet.ucla.edu).
- Utopianism: Early Chinese and Modern Expressions, including global Tianxia and political thought. Contact: Liang Cai (University of Notre Dame lcai@nd.edu).
- Confucian Feminism, Gender, and Sexuality, examining women's contributions to Confucianism. Liang Cai (University of Notre Dame lcai@nd.edu).
- Confucian Archaeology, to investigate unearthed materials including texts and archaeological rituals. Li Lan (McMaster University lil148@mcmaster.ca).
- Confucian Contemplative Practices, in light of the forthcoming special issue of Confucian Contemplations in the Journal of Contemplative Studies. Contact: Bin Song (Washington College bsong2@washcoll.edu); Judson Murray (Capital University jmurray88@capital.edu)
- Ideas related to the 2025 presidential theme of "Freedom" at AAR.

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 Boston from November 22-25, 2025.

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

- Bin Song, Washington College
bsong2@washcoll.edu
- Michael Ing
ming@indiana.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Constructive Muslim Thought and Engaged Scholarship Seminar

Call for Proposals

For the 2025 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 "Envisioning Futures for the Field" and another on "The Work of Muslim Ethical Engagement." 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
- Sarra Tlili, University of Florida
satlili@ufl.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Contemplative Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

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 co-sponsored panel with Cognitive Science of Religion Unit](#) addressing new scholarship focusing on the intersections of cognitive science and contemplative

research. Paper or panel proposals could include applied CSR to contemplative traditions, methodological analyses of how CSR and contemplative studies might be mutually informative, or any other work that topically concerns CSR and contemplative studies.

- a panel of indigenous practices
- a co-sponsored panel specifically addressing Indigenous traditions through the book *Flourishing Kin*
- a panel addressing psychedelic spaces and usage in relation to contemplative studies

Contact Loriliai Biernacki, loriliai.biernacki@colorado.edu or Michael Sheehy, 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
loriliai.biernacki@colorado.edu
- Michael Sheehy
ms4qm@virginia.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Contemporary Islam Unit

Call for Proposals

The Contemporary Islam Unit is soliciting proposals for the 2025 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:

- Islam and Black radical traditions
- [Revisiting Malcolm X: 100 years later](#)
- Palestine, especially as thematically connected to the 2025 AAR presidential theme of “freedom”
- Academic freedom: Methods and politics of doing and disseminating research in/on currently or recently precarious zones, including but not limited to Palestine/Israel or scholasticide in Gaza
- Critical theory approaches to the concept of freedom (in relation to various Islamic genres and practices or in conversation with scholars like, but not limited to, Sara Ahmed, Frantz Fanon, Paulo Freire, and Muhammad Iqbal)
- Theological approaches to freedom as an Islamic concept – whether theological, ethical, spiritual, legal, etc.
- Islam and African religions
- Papers with a theoretically innovative or methodologically courageous intervention in their research topic (for example, deliberately inclusive or exclusive citational practices; experiments with form or genre; innovative use of media)

Co-Sponsored Call:

["For Our Freedom, They Must Go! Authoritarianism, Islamophobia, Anti-Latinx Narratives and the Imaginaries of Resistance"](#)

At the turn of the 21st century, Samuel Huntington identified the United States as a nation of settlers facing multiple threats to its constitution, including Muslims and Latinx populations. Over the past two decades, both groups have become central targets in the discursive strategies of international fascism, now in power in the US and

in multiple spaces throughout the world. In collaboration with the *Contemporary Islam, Latino/a Religion, Culture, and Society* and *Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Studies* units, we invite proposals that show entanglements in one or more of these topics:

- Narratives of white genocide and replacement, particularly regarding Muslim and/or Latinx immigration.
- The new right-wing co-optation of Muslim and/or Latinx populations.
- New religioracial perspectives on whiteness in the United States regarding the future inclusion of a “Middle Eastern or North African” designation in the US census.
- They Are Eternal Foreigners: The denaturalization of longstanding Muslim and/or Latinx histories, memories, or individuals.
- Conspiracy theories that link Muslim and/or Latino Immigration with a Jewish plot to destroy Western civilization.
- Religious resistance against state oppression: Cross-cultural, Muslim and/or Latinx experiences.
- The intersection of Islamophobia and anti-Latinx sentiment with anti-Black racism, Sinophobia, anti-Native racism, and/or antisemitism.
- Liberationist and decolonial frameworks in resistance to racist and authoritarian structures.
- Fascism as “colonialism turned inward:” What the US and Europe can learn from Global South struggles?
- Doctrines of National/International Security, New Red/Green/Brown-scares.
- Conflictive Narratives of ‘Freedom’ and American consciousness.
- How white Christian nationalist ideologies use religious texts and myths of racial supremacy to justify the marginalization of non-Christian, immigrant, and racialized groups.

For all submissions:

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, Ibadiyya, 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 or online program, 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 participating in the program for the following two years.

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, Occidental College
candacem@reed.edu
- Kimberly Wortmann, Wake Forest University
wortmakt@wfu.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Contemporary Islam Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

With the additional call to use the flexibility of the online platform to encourage community organizers, representatives of social justice-oriented groups, or topics related to freedom & abolition, such as the Believers Bail Out movement or Muslim Justice League, to submit proposals related to the research behind their work.

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, Occidental College
candacem@reed.edu
- Kimberly Wortmann, Wake Forest University
wortmakt@wfu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

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 topics presented from any relevant methodology or theoretical orientation.

In addition to other Pagan-related topics, we are particularly interested in papers addressing: re-enchantment and contemporary Paganisms; Paganism, science, and technologies; Paganism and Tarot; more-than-human ethnography in Pagan contexts and scholarship; Paganism and visual media.

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
cwc@iastate.edu
- Giovanna Parmigiani
giovanna.parmigiani@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

Hip Hop, at its worst, is mindless entertainment set up by elite C-suite males who only care about streams, likes, and bottom-line sales. So many critics and artists of the

culture are not from the culture or representative of the culture—just more seeking fame and recognition. Hip Hop culture is much more complex than just making money and selling records. Hip Hop culture is a lifestyle, an ideology, a cultural movement; it is a voice, message, & creative space for many and it has now seen its 50th year alive. We are seeking papers, presentations, and/ or roundtables that engage the essence of true Hip Hop culture and the scholarship surrounding it. We are seeking a variety of areas that could be studied or engaged with. Such as:

- Hotep Culture & Hip Hop
- Conservative Hip Hop geopolitics
- Rappers for Trump
- Drake & His Sensibilities (examination)
- Beef and Battling in Hip Hop Related to Religion and Culture (this could be an actual event & show)
- Who Gets to “Gatekeep” in Hip Hop Culture?

Papers and presentations are invited that address/discuss the intersection between Hip Hop and Religion and any of the following key albums and/or cultural events:

There are several key anniversaries in 2025 (this list is selective NOT exhaustive):

- 40 years: Albums (1985): Run DMC (King of Rock); LL Cool J (Radio); Schooly D (Schooly D); Mantronix (The Album); Grandmaster Flash (They Said It Couldn't Be Done); Too \$hort (Players); UTFO (UTFO); The Fat Boys (The Fat Boys Are Back) Kurtis Blow (America).
- Events (1985) - “We Are the World - Single, USA for Africa; Mikhail Gorbachev becomes General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party; Lebanon hostage crisis; South Africa ends its ban on interracial marriages; FBI brings charges against the suspected heads of the five Mafia families in New York City; *Live Aid* benefit concerts in London and Philadelphia for famine relief in Ethiopia; DNA is first used in a criminal case to name a few.
- 30 years - Albums (1995): Smif-N-Wessun (Dah Shinin’); The Roods (Do You Want More?!?!?!); Too \$hort (Cocktails); Master P (99 ways to Die); DJ Quik (Safe + Sound); 2Pac (Me Against The World); E-40 (In A Major Way); Big L (Lifestylez ov da Poor & Dangerous); ODB (Return to the 36 Chambers); Mobb Deep (The Infamous); Masta Ace INC (Sittin’ On Chrome); Grand Puba (2000); Raekwon

(Only Built 4 Cuban Linx...); Junior M.A.F.I.A. (Conspiracy); Tha Dogg Pound (Dog Food); GZA (Liquid Swords); Company Flow (Funcrusher).

- Events (1995): WTO is established; Oklahoma City Bombing; Internet becomes fully privatized; OJ Simpson found not-guilty of the Murders of Nicole Brown-Simpson and Ron Goldman; Million Man March; end of Operation Desert Storm;
- 20 Years - Albums (2005): Game (The Documentary); Sage Francis (A Healthy Distrust); 50 Cent (The Massacre); Mike Jones (Who Is Mike Jones?); Quasimoto (The Further Adventures of Lord Quas); Common (Be); Kanye West (Late Registration); Little Brother (The MInstrel Show); DANGERDOOM (The Mouse & The Mask); Lil Wayne (The Carter II).
- Events (2004): North Korea announces its possession of nuclear weapons; YouTube launches; Kyoto Protocol goes into effect; Pope John Paul II dies; Live 8 to end world poverty; Hurricane Katrina makes landfall, killing over 1,000 people and doing 108 billion in damage; Kanye West - "George Bush Doesn't Care About Black People";
- 10 years - Albums (2015): Rae Sremmurd (SremmLife); Joey Badass (B4.Da.\$\$); Drake (If You're Reading This It's Too Late); Big Sean (Dark Sky Paradise); Ghostface Killah & BADBADNOTGOOD (Sour Soul); Freddie Gibbs (Pronto); Kendrick Lamar (To Pimp A Butterfly); Tyler, The Creator (Cherry Bomb); Wale (The Album About Nothing); Action Bronson (Mr. Wonderful); Earl Sweatshirt (I Don't Like Shit, I Don't Go Outside: An Album by Earl Sweatshirt); A\$AP Rocky (At. Long. Last. A\$AP); Lil Dirk (Remember My Name); Vince Staples (Summertime '06); Dr. Dre (Compton); Travis Scott (Rodeo); Andy Mineo (Uncomfortable); Drake & Future (What A Time To Be Alive); J Dilla (Dillatronic); Logic (The Incredible Story).
- Events (2015) - Racially motivated shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church; Donald Trump announces his run for POTUS; US Supreme Court upholds same-sex marriage; Pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli is revealed to be the winner of the auction of the single copy of the Wu-Tang Clan album *Once Upon a Time in Shaolin*, valued at \$2 million.

[Potential Co-Sponsorship - Hip Hop, Religion, and Politics - For a possible co-sponsorship with the Religion & Politics Unit, we invite papers that consider the relationship between Hip Hop, Religion and Politics. Potential topic may include but are not limited to:](#)

- the intersectionality of Hip Hop, religion, and politics with special consideration of the emerging diversity of political stances being embraced by hip hop artists
- exploration of the ways Hip Hop can encourage both creative freedom and political freedom. This conversation seems especially fitting given the location of the conference in Boston and other Massachusetts communities that have served as intellectual epicenters for transcendentalism, free thought, and artistic pursuits of all kinds throughout American history. In what ways do the creative impulses of Hip Hop perpetuate the legacy of free thought through the application of musical artistry to reflections on political and social issues?
- the ways Hip Hop address the different meanings of “freedom” in the black and white experiences of American history. Can Hip Hop reframe the American story for minority voices and help us all understand the complexities and ironic costs of “freedom” when some peoples’ ability to enjoy freedom depends on others’ inability to access the benefits of freedom?

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

- Daniel White Hodge, North Park University
dan@whitehodge.com
- Justin Smith, Azusa Pacific University
jmsmith@apu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

With the 2025 presidential theme (Freedom) in mind, the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit is seeking proposals for individual papers, panels, or roundtables on the following topics:

- Critical discourses on religion and/as freedom: Religion has long served as a site for theorizing freedom, whether as the antithesis to freedom (as in Enlightenment narratives of charlatan priests duping and controlling the gullible masses), as a site for the achievement of freedom (whether in classical notions of moksha or "liberation," or in modern political struggles like the US civil rights movement in its connection to the Black Church). The CTDR unit asks for papers that probe the ways in which religion has been understood in relation to freedom across a range of intellectual archives, toward collaborative conversation on this theme.
- Freedom of expression in Religious Studies: The Current Crisis: In Florida and elsewhere, new legal regimes have placed significant pressure on religious studies curricula, restricting certain kinds of academic speech, even as popular mobilization against the attacks on Gaza has underlined the persistence of the 'Palestine exception' to free speech ideals. How does "freedom" operate as a principle that shapes, overdetermines, or otherwise structures the field today? In what ways is "freedom" an adequate sign for contesting the present conjuncture?
- We are also interested in new book or Author-Meets-Critics panels.

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
k.rakow@uu.nl
- Kristin Scheible
scheiblk@reed.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

We aim to facilitate theoretically and methodologically rigorous sessions that are attuned to dynamics of power and that feature scholars from multiple subfields, methodology, type of institution, and professional rank.

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 models.

For the 2025 Annual Meeting, we particularly welcome proposals on the following topics:

Lived Religion Retrospective

Since its appearance in the late 1990s, “lived religion” has become a widely accepted and broadly applied modality of the study of religion, bringing an ethnographic corrective to the textual and institutional bias of the field. We invite a wide range of critical perspectives on the origins, application, and legacy of the lived religions movement, with special attention to how this term has been differently mobilized in the various subfields of religious studies.

[The Hermeneutics of \(Neo\)fascism in the Study of Religion](#)

How does the present landscape of our field relate to terms and methods linked to fascist, Nazi, and authoritarian scholarship? From Carl Schmitt’s theory of sovereignty to Mircea Eliade’s sacred to Rudolph Otto’s science of religions, we invite proposals that probe how recent turns in scholarship – with its turn to the fugitive sacreds, unassimilable remainders, effervescent flights, and esoteric knowledges – inherit, disavow, repress, and/or reconfigure the hermeneutics of fascism.

[Palestine in the Study of Religion](#)

Building on the success of the 2024 co-sponsored session “Constitutive Absence? The Cultural History of Palestine in the Study of Religion,” we invite papers that advance this project of addressing the historical (if disavowed) presence of Palestine, Palestinians, and the global anti-colonial struggle for Palestine liberation in the field.

Power, Politics, and Identity in the Constitution of Subfields

Inspired by successful and important conversations about the prevalence of whiteness and caste in the generational trajectories of Hindu Studies, we welcome submissions that open this conversation and reflect on resonant themes in relation to other subfields

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
- Lucia Hulsether
lhulseth@skidmore.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Daoist Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The Daoist Studies Unit invites proposals for the AAR Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts (November 22–25, 2025). 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 (ideally 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 2025.

1. Daoism and the Digital World (Michael Naparstek)
2. Daoism and Divinity (Mark Meulenbeld)
3. Theoretical Imperialism (Tobias Zürn)
4. Daoism and Contemplative Practices (Larson DiFiori)
5. Daoism, Animals, and Insects (Stuart Young)
6. Daoism and the Senses (Tyler M. Fezell)
7. Daoism and Drugs (Jonathan Pettit)
8. Daoism and Manichaeism (Stephen Eskildsen)
9. Daoism and Tantrism (David Mozina)
10. Roundtable: New Directions in the Studies of Early Daoism (Matthew Duperon)

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.

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
liujingyu1117@gmail.com
- Tobias Zuern, Reed College
hmtzuern@ust.hk

Daoist Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The Daoist Studies Unit invites proposals for the AAR Online Conference in June 2025. 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. Below are the ideas proposed at the business meeting for 2025.

1. Religious Readings of the *Zhuangzi* - Tobias Benedikt Zürn (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)

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. We hope that you can reach out to others by utilizing resources, such as the Women in the Study of Asian Religions database (<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/>) Please feel free to contact the co-chairs for additional information.

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
liujingyu1117@gmail.com
- Tobias Zuern, Reed College
hmtzuern@ust.hk

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit invites proposals on the theme “Death by Design.” Engaging this year’s presidential theme of “Freedom”, we encourage submissions that interrogate what it means to approach death and dying with intention. Topics may include but are not limited to: freedom of religion in end-of-life care; the “freedom to die” movement and debates surrounding euthanasia and assisted dying; the aesthetics of death as expressed through visual and performing arts; technological and medicinal life extension; intersections of secularism, religion, and public policy on death practices; and the role of ritual in crafting meaningful encounters with death. Submissions that incorporate diverse disciplinary approaches, methodological perspectives, and global or comparative contexts are especially welcome. We also welcome non-traditional presentations, full panel submissions, artistic work, roundtables, and book discussions.

[Co-sponsored panel with the Religion and Memory Unit](#)

The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit and the Religion and Memory Unit invite proposals on the theme "The Afterlives of Memory." How do we preserve the memories of those who are dying? How do we preserve the memories of the dead—both about the deceased and the memories they held? What happens when memory itself dies? And how are ghost stories and other “scary histories” of monsters or ghouls reflect a kind of haunting memory? We welcome papers and panels that examine the material culture and immaterial processes of the afterlives of memory, as well as theoretical studies reflections on what memory’s afterlives tell us about their social and political contexts.

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, dying, grieving, the dead, and the afterlife. We are open to all methodologies, religious traditions, and topics of inquiry.

Chairs

- Jamie Brummitt, University of North Carolina At Wilmington
brummittj@uncw.edu
- John Borchert, University of North Carolina At Greensboro
Jwborchert@uncg.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Drugs and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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 use of alcohol, pharmaceuticals, and caffeine, as well as the numerous dimensions of addiction and recovery. A few potential topics that emerged during our last business meeting focused on:

- psychoactive substances in Medieval religious cultures
- everyday drugs like pharmaceuticals, tobacco, or coffee
- addiction, recovery, and religious life. We will also entertain proposals on other topics as well.

We invite also papers, panels, and roundtables for co-sponsored sessions.

Statement of Purpose

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.

This proposed 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 news paths for the value-neutral research into drugs and religion.

Chairs

- Gary M. Laderman
gladerm@emory.edu

- Joseph Christian Greer, Harvard University
jchristiang@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

For November 2025 we welcome paper and panel proposals on the following topics:

[-Masculinity and Neo-Traditionalism \(co-sponsored with the Men, Masculinities, and Religion Unit\)](#)

[-Minorities and Freedom in the Middle East: Biblical, Theological, and Socio-Political Perspectives \(co-sponsored with the Middle Eastern Christianity Unit and the Biblical Exegesis from Eastern Orthodox Perspectives Unit of the SBL\)](#)

-Conceiving Freedom in Orthodox Bodies (Ecclesial, Physical, Political, etc.)

-Gatekeeping and Orthodox Tradition

-Topics related to Orthodox Christianity broadly conceived

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
- Sarah Riccardi-Swartz, Northeastern University
riccardi@nyu.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

Noting the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, we welcome paper and panel proposals on the following topics:

- Unity
- Conciliarity
- Synodality
- Mission
- Hierarchy
- Creeds

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
- Sarah Riccardi-Swartz, Northeastern University
riccardi@nyu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Ecclesial Practices Unit

Call for Proposals

Ecclesial Practices Unit Call for Papers

American Academy of Religion

Boston 2025

Title: Expressions of Freedom and Unfreedom

What do freedom and unfreedom feel like? What does it feel like to be free *from*, *for*, and *with*? How do feelings of freedom relate to feelings of other concepts such as power, justice, mercy, constraint, resistance, movement, or liberty?

The Ecclesial Practices Unit invites papers that use ethnographic methods, broadly defined, and focus on the potential for qualitative theological methods to access the embodied, emotional, and affective dimensions of experience. We express particular interest in submissions that employ creative qualitative methods and engage a broad range of Christian practices within and beyond traditional ecclesial contexts.

Potential themes include, but are not limited to:

- Practices of liberation, freedom, and unfreedom in established and emerging ecclesial communities, including those with a history of being the oppressors rather than the oppressed.
- Practices of freedom in global contexts, especially in settings where Christian communities experience different forms of restriction and freedom in their practice.
- Expressions or longings of freedom in ecclesial artistic forms such as liturgy, spoken word, testimony, congregational music, visual arts, dance, protest, and more.
- Discourses of freedom embedded in settler mythologies and embodied in contemporary religious practice, including the co-opting of freedom in the perception of Christian persecution in the United States.
- Pedagogies of freedom in religious education that nurture learning in new ways or redefine the classroom. What kind of affective experiences are part of "education as the practice of freedom" (bell hooks, 1994)?

- Engagements with the legacies of embodied freedom and unfreedom in liberation theologies
- Feelings of freedom and constraint concerning purity culture, and sex and sexuality more broadly, in ecclesial settings.
- Reflections on freedom and constraint in the qualitative research process.

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
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- Rebecca Spurrier
spurrierr@ctsnet.edu

[Ecclesiological Investigations Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

Ecclesiologies of Freedom

In light of this year's presidential theme of "Freedom," the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit invites papers for a session that addresses how different Christian communities do or do not envision the life of the church in terms of Christian or human freedom. In particular, we hope to consider the diverse uses of freedom or liberty as ecclesiological categories for particular churches preserving, critiquing, or adapting Christian tradition in their contexts. Possible paper topics might include, but are not limited to:

1. The distinctive ecclesiological approaches of "free churches"
2. Pentecostal/charismatic revival as a means of ecclesiological liberation
3. Basic ecclesial communities (e.g. in Latin America, Eastern Europe, or South Asia) and ecclesiologies of resistance to (or liberty in the midst of) government suppression
4. Theological considerations of the constraining/empowering function of creeds and other fixed guidelines for belief, confession, and practice
5. Ecclesiological implications of Martin Luther's "Freedom of a Christian" (and of non-Lutheran reactions to it)
6. Synodality in the Roman Catholic Church (or more broadly) as a vision of ecclesial freedom

The Ecclesiology of Project 2025

Additionally, the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit invites papers that explore freedom of religion and other freedoms that recur throughout *Project 2025 (Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise)*. How does the concept of religion at work in the document compare with the ecclesiologies of the diverse groups of Christians supporting various elements of this conservative agenda? Does *Project 2025* rely upon a consistent and coherent notion of the church's role as a 'building block' of a healthy society, which might require placing severe constraints on certain freedoms? Or are there multiple political theologies at play? What do the occasional references to non-Christian religious groups illustrate about *Project 2025's* imagination of the role of

religion in society? Does the freedom of religion promoted here for some groups result in unstated constraints on others?

Paper proposals on the political theology and ecclesiology of *Project 2025* could approach the document in a general sense, or focus on specific elements of its diagnoses and policy suggestions (environmentalism as a 'pseudo-religion', religious organizations and labor policy, religious freedom and development, etc.), or place the document in dialogue with the ecclesiologies of one or more prominent contributors or movements (Russ Vought, Kevin Roberts, Christian reconstructionism, identity politics, etc.). We also welcome comparisons of Project 2025's underlying political theologies and ecclesiologies with similar/related projects or visions outside of the U.S. context.

Conversion to "none"

The World Christianity, Religious Conversions, and Ecclesiological Investigations units invite papers for a joint session exploring the nature of deconversion interpreted as both turning away and turning towards (i.e. deeper conversion) as an exercise of agency. One important feature of 'deconversion' may be a decision to leave or pull back from active association with a religious institution or a traditional faith community. How does disaffiliation function to critique or challenge religious organizations? What role does the abuse and exercise of power, especially institutional power, play in the process of deconversion? How might one consider the distinction between rejecting an institution and relinquishing a religious identity altogether?

Likewise, alternative sources of community, solidarity, and spiritual meaning may be significant pull factors that facilitate religious change. Where are people going and why are they drawn there? Following deconversion, in what ways, if any, do religious traditions still shape an individual's idea of "authentic community"? This panel seeks papers that advance our understanding of what changes and what remains the same, or even intensifies, when people find the freedom to redefine their religious belonging and turn to spiritual practices they experience as more lifegiving?

Statement of Purpose

Ecclesiological Investigations Unit Mission Statement

The Ecclesiological Investigations Unit seeks to serve as a hub for national and international collaboration in ecclesiology, acting as a facilitator to support conversations, research, and education in this field. Our Unit strives to appeal to a wide range of AAR members through its inter-disciplinary nature and the way in which it

crosses many academic boundaries in theology and religious studies. The Unit's fundamental aims are as follows:

- Organizing and sharing in ecumenical, interreligious, and interdisciplinary research and discussion, bringing ecclesiology into dialogue with other sub-disciplines in theology and religious studies as well as the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities.
- Equally encouraging established professionals, doctoral students and early scholars to have a platform for their research and eventual publication.
- Providing a space and a platform for emerging and marginalized voices in our field.
- Fostering diversity and inclusion in all dimensions of our work.
- Publishing the best fruits of our collaborations in journals such as *Ecclesiology* (Brill), the *Journal of World Christianity* (Penn State), and *Ecumenical Trends* (Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute) or in edited volumes such the *Pathways for Dialogue* series (Springer/Palgrave Macmillan).

Chairs

- Britta Meiers Carlson, Sewanee: The University of the South
bmcarlso@bu.edu
- Cristina Lledo Gomez, BBI-The Australian Institute of Theological Education
cristina.lledogomez@bbi.catholic.edu.au

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Energy, Extraction, and Religion Seminar

Call for Proposals

In the fourth of our five year EER Seminar, we invite proposals about the fusion of religiously emboldened political power, energy infrastructures, and extractive economies.

One session will be an author-meets-critics forum featuring Mohamed Amer Meziane's *States of the Earth: An Ecological and Racial History of Secularization* (Verso 2024).

Engaging current debates in secular studies and political theology, Meziane theorizes secularism neither as de-Christianization nor the continuation of Christianity. In the face of failed mass conversion of colonial subjects, Meziane demonstrates that imperial powers turned efforts toward secular civilizing missions, pursuing eschatological perfection on Earth through industrialization and fossil fuel extraction. Meziane therefore offers an alternative to the fossil capital narrative of climate emergency, demonstrating fossil capitalism, colonialism, and the violence of the modern state as rooted in “imperiality,” or the ongoing afterlives of imperialism. We invite proposals for responses to Meziane’s text as well as proposals that speak to the text’s broader themes.

For our second session, we invite reflections about the ways “extraction” and “extractivism” show up in the study of religion. There are at least three dimensions to this, and we encourage interested paper proposals to consider how to incorporate one of these dimensions.

(1) As we meet in Boston in 2025, with its long history of colonialism and nationalism, and in light of current shifts in US and global geopolitics, we welcome papers about those realities pertaining to energy, extraction, and religion.

(2) In this vein, what does Dominic Boyer’s lens of *energopower*, or the “codependence between our contemporary infrastructures of political power and our infrastructures of energy”—a fusion of a “particular organization of fuel” and the “particular organization of state-based political power” (Boyer 2019, 16)—illuminate in the current moment? Furthermore, what might this lens facilitate in the study of religion, and how can the study of religion further shape it?

(3) We also invite paper proposals that delve into topics that have surfaced as crucial to engage over our three prior years of meetings. These areas of possible examination include but are not limited to:

- Where are extraction/extractivism being invoked? In what ways and to what ends? What theorists help to clarify the dynamics involved?

- Who is doing the work of bringing extractivism into religious or theological discourses?
- How is “extraction” (and related concepts) defined, theorized or undertheorized in ways salient to the study of religion and the environmental humanities?
- How are human aspirations for energy and extraction facilitated/resisted/interrupted by nonhuman and more than human forces and entities? What frameworks and analytics, including those from the study of religion, can enable us to better capture these dynamics?
- Where do dynamics of extraction go unrecognized or under-theorized? What difference does/would/could it make to bring a critical apparatus regarding extraction into these contexts and discourses? Where is more critical examination and scholarly specificity needed?
- What is the relationship of extraction to other critical phenomena and concepts, such as (but not limited to): exploitation; racial capitalism; colonialism and coloniality?
- How is energy and extraction taught? How do you teach it? How should it be taught within religious and theological studies?
- What are some key voices or texts on energy/extractivism that religion scholars should be more aware of, for research or for teaching or both?
- What is the relationship between epistemological or conceptual extractivism and material extraction? How do these dynamics appear in the academy and/or production of research? What are constructive ways to engage and ameliorate such dynamics? In this sense, we invite presentations that build on the 2022 EER session on methodological extractivism in the study of religion (which included presentations on “prospecting” dynamics in environmental humanities, extractive scholarly methods, and anti-extractive and reparative scholarship).
- How are religious traditions “mined” for solutions to contemporary problems in popular culture, in scholarship, or in environmental humanities?

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
evan.berry@asu.edu
- Terra Schwerin Rowe
terra.rowe@unt.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Esotericism Unit

Call for Proposals

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 papers on the following themes:

ESOTERICISM ON TRIAL

Throughout history, esoteric beliefs and practices have been frequently outlawed, criminalized, and scandalized. The Satanic panic in the 1980s (and its lingering traces, for example in contemporary conspiracy theories), the burning at the stake of philosopher and alchemist Giordano Bruno in 1600 and astrologer Cecco d'Ascoli in 1327, the witchcraft trials, and the various court cases Aleister Crowley was involved in are poignant examples. Esotericisms have also entered the courtroom in other ways: anthropologist Paul Christopher Johnson observes, for example, the use of so-called “spirit-testimonies” in court cases in Brazil.

What is the relationship between law and esoteric practice? We invite papers that consider “esotericism on trial” in a variety of contexts. Topics to consider include:

- The use of court records and trial transcripts as archival source material;
- Accusations of esoteric religious practice as themselves a crime, like witchcraft accusations;
- How race, sexuality, gender, and class play a role in the criminalization of esoteric belief and practice;
- The role of secrecy and public perception of private religious practices;
- Public perception of esoteric belief as socially deviant, othering, and a potential motivation for criminal behavior

ESOTERICISM IN PRINT

Books, periodicals, pamphlets, and other forms of texts play a substantial and central role in (the dissemination and representation of) esoteric belief and praxis. This panel invites scholars to engage explicitly with “esotericism in print.” Such engagement invites a host of theoretical, methodological, and conceptual questions around reading cultures, publishing strategies, collecting practices, and authorship. Consider Francis Barrett’s *The Magus, or, Celestial Intelligencer* (1801), a text in ceremonial magic that borrowed heavily from Agrippa’s *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (1531) and, in turn, would be plagiarized by occultist and publisher Lauron William de Laurence in his *The Great Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism* (1910). De Laurence would sell his version via mail order, a business he advertised in newspapers: to this day, ritual specialists in the US, the Caribbean, and West Africa experiment with the text. Members of the Nation of Islam, in turn, would have to consult a newspaper, *The Final Call*, if they were interested in the esoteric writings of Mother Tynnetta Muhammad, one of the movement’s most important theologians--decades prior, the movement’s leader Elijah Muhammad also used a newspaper as central form of communication. And occult bookstores, like Treadwell’s Books in London, remain central loci for both scholars and a general readership, to access esoteric texts, equipment, and social networks.

We invite papers that look at:

- Various textual forms, including books, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, etc.
- Various genres, including poetry, science fiction, grimoires, etc
- Reading cultures, examining for example book inscriptions, forms of collective reading, ritual reading, secrecy, etc.;

- Publishing, considering the role of esoteric presses, bookstores, mail order companies, catalogs, newspapers in the dissemination and circulation of esoteric belief and practice;
- Collecting practices, looking for example at the importance of personal and public libraries and (digital) archives;
- Authorship, including concerns around translation, plagiarism, and copy-right issues, as well as the use of pseudonyms;
- The materiality of texts
- Esotericism studies in print: rigorous engagement with journals, book series, and newsletters in the field

[Co-sponsored session with the Esotericism Unit and the Religion and Ecology Unit:](#)

[Ecology and Esotericism](#)

During a paper for the Religion and Ecology Unit at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the AAR, Bron Taylor noted with regret that the world's major religious traditions—with some exceptions—have not embraced environmentalism or serious attention to the ecological crisis. By contrast, it seems, many new religious movements and esoteric groups seem to have embraced environmentalism as a matter of religious concern. What is it about these new and esoteric religious movements that enable them to embrace environmental concern in a way that the major religious traditions apparently cannot? We welcome papers for a co-sponsored session with the Esotericism Unit and the Religion and Ecology Unit on ecology and esotericism. Possible subjects could include but are not limited to:

- Esoteric cosmologies that locate divinity within the natural world rather than as a transcendent reality,
- The moral status of nonhumans in esoteric and new religious movements,
- The sacredness and moral status of the natural world in New Age, Wiccan, Pagan, and Neopagan communities,
- The intersection between new and esoteric religious groups and the radical environmental movement.
- The viability (or lack thereof) of new and esoteric religious groups as effective political actors.
- Analyzing esoteric or new-religious movements that are more conducive to greening than world religions
- Esoteric ecological communities as spaces of freedom and liberation
- Elemental symbolism, paranormal experiences in nature (e.g tree spirits, UFOs/UAPs, familiars) and their ecological significance.

- How esoteric traditions intersect with posthumanist and speculative realism theories, particularly in their exploration of the agency of nonhuman and material entities.
- Analyses of esoteric cosmologies or ontologies that propose alternative conceptions of nature or the nonhuman world (e.g., nature as a living organism, the interconnectedness of all beings, or the sacredness of nonhuman entities) as potential resources for rethinking human-nature relationships in the face of ecological crises.
- Studies of esoteric communities actively engaging with issues of environmental justice, including their responses to the disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalized communities.

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
- Timothy Grieve-Carlson, Rice University
tgriev Carlson@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Ethics Unit

Call for Proposals

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

Freedom and Responsibility Revisited

Abraham Joshua Heschel famously wrote, “In a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.” In keeping with this year’s presidential theme, the Ethics Unit welcomes proposals that examine the relationship between freedom and responsibility. We are especially interested in papers that approach this question comparatively—either comparing between religious traditions or cultural contexts—as well as papers that center on people who are not free or whose agency is constrained.

Media and Social Media

A recent Pew study reports that 54% of Americans sometimes receive news from social media, and more than half of TikTok and X users say they rely on these platforms to stay informed. By contrast, in 2024, 10% of *Washington Post* readers unsubscribed to protest the newspaper’s decision not to endorse a presidential candidate, and the mainstream media has been a frequent target of right-wing rhetoric. How should we interpret and respond to these cultural shifts? We welcome papers that address the ethics of journalism, social media, (mis)information, and the concept of a free press. (Papers do not need to focus on the United States).

[The Ethicist as Hero](#)

The 2024 film *Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin.* ignited criticism from scholars who argued that it distorts Dietrich Bonhoeffer's legacy and promotes a message at odds with his writings. Similar criticism has been levied at *Gandhi* (1982), *Confucius* (2010), *Hannah Arendt* (2012), and *Restless Heart: The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (2012). Do the authors who belong on ethics syllabi also belong on the silver screen? What are the benefits and dangers of looking to the lives of philosophers and theologians for inspiration and entertainment? How have storytellers done this responsibly or irresponsibly in the past, and what lessons can be learned from analyzing their efforts? Should kids watch cartoons about al-Ghazali courageously writing the *Ihya*, or is Heidegger right that "he lived, he worked, he died" is all we need to know about Aristotle's life?

[Co-sponsored with the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit]

The Anthropocene and Religious Ethics

Twenty-five years ago, Paul Crutzen popularized the term "Anthropocene" to refer to the epoch in which humanity has had a significant impact on the earth's geology and ecology. Crutzen's article contained a dire warning but also a note of hope, suggesting that humans could pursue "careful manipulation and restoration of the natural environment." The Ethics Unit invites proposals on the subject of the Anthropocene and religious ethics, and we welcome proposals engaging with a wide variety of religious and ethical traditions.

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
nichole.flores@virginia.edu
- Russell Johnson, University of Chicago
rpjohnson@uchicago.edu

[Evangelical Studies Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

The Evangelical Studies Unit invites proposals for individual papers or complete panels related to the presidential theme: Freedom. We welcome papers exploring how this theme manifests within evangelical theology, history, culture, politics, practice, activism, 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 variety and range of definitions for freedoms proliferate in evangelical theology? How are the pursuit of freedom and life in union with God convergent in evangelical theology? How are they divergent? How have evangelicals sought to constrain the freedom of others, either in pursuit of their own freedom or in an effort to limit the dangers of unfettered freedom?

We are especially interested in the use of freedom rhetorically and practically for shaping evangelical engagement in the public sphere. Examples of sub-themes include:

- Competing definitions of freedom in evangelical theology
- Religious freedom and politics
- The carceral state
- Atonement theology
- Immigration
- Technology and freedom
- Academic freedom
- Freedom in the Spirit

[Co-Sponsored Session with the Class, Labor, and Religion Unit](#): We invite responses to Ken Estey's recently published book *Labor Evangelicals: Faith, Authority, and Resistance*

at Work (Palgrave, 2024) or papers examining working-class evangelicals' theo-ethical perspectives on or engagement with work, unions, class, and/or workplace power.

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

- Jessica Wong
jessicawong@apu.edu
- Peter Choi
pchoi@gtu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Exploratory Session

Call for Proposals

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 3, 2025. Notification of program acceptance will be announced in early April 2025.

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](#).

Chairs

- Amy Defibaugh
adeibaugh@aarweb.org
- Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida
ann.gleig@ucf.edu
- Claudia Schippert
claudiaschippert@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Exploratory Session

Call for Proposals

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 3, 2025. Notification of program acceptance will be announced in early April 2025.

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Chairs

- Amy Defibaugh
adeibaugh@aarweb.org

- Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida
ann.gleig@ucf.edu
- Claudia Schippert
claudiaschippert@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit

Call for Proposals

For a roundtable on the challenges of reinvention, merger, and closure that target religious studies departments today, we invite proposals for short papers (7 minutes) on experiences, tactics, and tools for navigating our changing higher education landscape. We are especially interested in presentations that highlight marginalized perspectives, students, and/or scholarship. Please email Annie Blazer (ablazer@wm.edu) if you would like to be considered as a panelist.

[For a possible co-sponsorship with Law, Religion and Culture](#), in response to the presidential theme of “Freedom,” we are interested in exploring the limits on freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion on college campuses. We welcome papers and panel proposals addressing protests, encampments, and other forms of resistance; police actions and surveillance on campus; legislative intervention in curricula and legislative oversight of syllabi and course design; as well as responses to such restrictions by students, professors, and administrators. Relatedly, the meaning of “DEI,” its current role in the political imaginary, and corporate and campus reimaginations of diversity initiatives in our immediate political moment are also topics of interest.

[We are also planning an author-meets-respondents session, co-sponsored with Religions in the Latina/o Americas](#), on *Sanctuary Everywhere: The Fugitive Sacred in the Sonoran Desert* by Barbara Sostaita focusing on the themes of borders, fugitivity, migration, sacred space, sanctuary practices, and lived religion. Please email Wendy Mallette (wendy.mallette@ou.edu) if you would like to be considered as a respondent.

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. FTRR will continue 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 & Mary
annie.blazer@gmail.com
- Amanda Nichols
nichols.amanda08@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Films

Call for Proposals

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.

Chairs

- Amy Defibaugh
adefibaugh@aarweb.org

- Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida
ann.gleig@ucf.edu
- Claudia Schippert
claudiaschippert@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Films

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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.

Chairs

- Amy Defibaugh
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- Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida
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- Claudia Schippert
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Foucault and the Study of Religion Seminar

Call for Proposals

We invite papers for the 2025 sessions 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.

2025 Call for Papers for the November in-person meeting 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
- Further interventions in and on Foucault and historical and global Christianities.
- 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.

Please note that proposals which raise questions and themes beyond those listed here will be given full consideration. We are especially interested in work that engages Foucault historically, theoretically, and otherwise in relation to religious traditions that are historically underrepresented in this context.

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

- Daniel Wyche, University of Chicago
wyche@uchicago.edu
- Niki Clements, Rice University
niki.clements@rice.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Foucault and the Study of Religion Seminar

Call for Proposals

For our 2025 online meeting, we would like to convene a special session rooted in—but not exclusive to—Foucault, Iran, Islam, and political spirituality. Papers can also take a theoretical approach rooted in the conceptual resources and problems that emerge from texts, dialogues, and disputes around the Iranian intervention.

Foucault, Islam, Iran, and Beyond: What do we make of Foucault's Iranian dispatches 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" are very welcome.

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

- Daniel Wyche, University of Chicago
wyche@uchicago.edu
- Niki Clements, Rice University
niki.clements@rice.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Gay Men and Religion Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

The Gay Men and Religion Program Unit invites papers and panels exploring the following subjects/themes for November 2025:

- The religious experiences of gay men and men who have sex with men from a variety of global and indigenous contexts, including sexual experiences, the formation of identities, as well as 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 reflection on whether concepts and categories of “gay” and “queer” are expressions of western colonialism; and/or the extent to which anti-gay/queer ideology is an imposition of western religious/political colonialism.
- We invite proposals that explore the rhetoric of the “good/normal gays,” as that appeared in the 2024 U.S. presidential race. Is there a “good/normal gay” identity that social and political conservatives now accept, or tolerate? To what extent, or to what end? Conversely, what resistance arose to the 2024 rhetoric of the “good/normal gays”: religiously, politically, socially, and/or morally?
- We invite proposals that explore the work of gay activism for equal rights under the law, at the intersection of religion and politics. Perspectives may include (but are not limited to): gay activists whose life work is perceived to be threatened by new conservative political leadership and policies; gay activists who have (or who have not) included transgender rights in their advocacy (and why); the way in which gay activists navigate the separation of religion and state while articulating equal rights for LGBTQIA+ people from religious perspectives.
- We invite proposals that explore the role of the 'gay elder' in religious and social communities, including different kinds of gay elders and their relationships with other generations.

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

- Michael Pettinger
mfpettinger@gmail.com
- Richard McCarty, Mercyhurst University
rmccarty@mercyhurst.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Gay Men and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

We are pleased to continue to offer a June session that is dedicated to "works in progress." We invite proposals that explain the kind of academic project you are working on (broadly conceived). What is the project? What is working? Where are you stuck? What insights or resources do you need to continue the project?

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

- Michael Pettinger
mfpettinger@gmail.com
- Richard McCarty, Mercyhurst University
rmccarty@mercyhurst.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Global-Critical Philosophy of Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

Translational Feminisms for Philosophers of Religion

Co-sponsored by the Society for South Asian and Comparative Philosophy

How might philosophers of religion constructively approach the unresolved, intractable, transcultural issue of patriarchy and gender-based oppression from the theoretical resources typically marginalized by the field? We seek papers and panel proposals that clearly articulate a specific problem, outline arguments in response, and philosophically evaluate the arguments' merits. Our session will thereby produce a mutually illuminating conversation.

Unthought Unfreedoms: Engaged and Critical Perspectives on Philosophy of Religion

Co-sponsored by the Political Theology Unit

Philosophical reflection often involves thinking through certain types of conditions. How might we understand, and possibly interrogate, texts and topics in the philosophy of religion with attention to the effects of contingent yet persistent social structures? How might such an engaged and critical question help us consider ways of relating philosophy of religion to the AAR's 2025 presidential theme of "freedom"? We seek papers that discuss the various ways that philosophers of religion might identify unfreedoms, and then argue the merits of leaving these conditions intact.

The Category of "Nature" and Anthropocentrism of Philosophy of Religion

Co-sponsored by the Society for South Asian and Comparative Philosophy

We seek individual papers and panel proposals organized around topics that use 'nature' as a key category for philosophy of religion. Proposals should emphasize 'nature' as a concept for the philosophy of religion.

The dichotomy of "nature" and "culture" is a by-product of the Enlightenment, where nature is conceptualized as something to be observed, analyzed, and studied by humans from an anthropocentric standpoint. Nature is thereby framed as an "other," separate or disconnected from humans and other entities. Classic philosophy of religion often reflects this bifurcation while proving God's existence or establishing God's attributes (e.g., natural theology). The effect is to limit the field's analytical scope. We seek proposals for papers or full panels on any topic whose arguments deploy 'nature' as a category inclusive of humans, non-human beings, and divine entities.

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
mhgorisse@gmail.com
- Nathan R. B. Loewen
nrloewen@ua.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

[Global-Critical Philosophy of Religion Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

Liberation Philosophy of Religion

We seek individual papers and panel proposals organized around topics that consider the material conditions of poverty and connected forms of oppression. How might the methods and tools of conventional philosophy of religion think with, and for liberation from, poverty? What conditions or limits must the field work with to articulate a pedagogy of the oppressed? What can philosophers of religion write with a preferential option for the poor? How might they do so?

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.

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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
mhgorisse@gmail.com
- Nathan R. B. Loewen
nrloewen@ua.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Hagiology Seminar

Call for Proposals

Fictional Saints

Media that represent extraordinary individuals (saints, sages, heroes, etc.) are well known for their interplay between “historical” and “fictional” elements—a polarity that has been justly interrogated in contemporary theory. This roundtable takes up the status of fiction as a cross-cultural dimension of hagiography, in three respects: (1) The textures and functions of fictional artistry in conventional hagiography (e.g. comic or tragic tropes in Christian saints’ *Lives*, narrative cases preceding Zen Buddhist commentaries) or the “historical” force of even “ahistorical” saintly representations (e.g. Good King Śivi, St. George, Nasreddin Hodja); (2) The role of saintly figures appearing in fictionalized representations of historical religions (e.g. Hesse’s *Siddhartha*, Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, Singer’s “Yentl the Yeshiva Boy”); (3) Saintly figures and functions in speculative fictional worlds, which may enact saintly dynamics (e.g. Star Wars, DC Comics, *Dungeons & Dragons*) or upend saintly dynamics (e.g. Star Trek, *Cat’s Cradle*, Warhammer 40K). Contributions reinterpreting or critiquing the putative polarity of history and fiction in religious media are also welcome.

In keeping with the collaborative ethos of the Hagiology Seminar, this roundtable will involve participation in a few virtual conversations leading up to an in-person session at the 2025 AAR Annual Meeting.

Saints and (Alternative) Embodiment

The embodied aspects and bodily dynamics of extraordinary individuals (saints, sages, heroes, etc.) are well known and vary widely across traditions and time periods. Saints have been regularly studied for the ways that their (cultivated and represented) bodies perfect, unsettle, transgress, and critique human norms. This panel extends these reliable questions about saintly embodiment beyond the realm of the human. How do they exist in bodies that are decidedly not human or adjacent to the human realm (animal, spiritual, technological, spatial, etc.). In other words, in what ways are saintly figures embedded in systems of nonhuman life (and with what effect in their hagiographical media)? In what ways do they interact with or adopt the attributes of animals, plants, and nonliving spaces (e.g. in comparisons of saints with bees, trees, stones, and so forth)? In what ways have saintly bodies transcended or exited the realm of the human through their own supernatural powers or others' technological adaptations? To what extent and in what ways do theoretical discussions of animality, ecology, technology, materialism, and objects/things (or more generally the "nonhuman turn") advance the work of comparative and cross-cultural analysis of such extraordinary individuals?

In keeping with the collaborative ethos of the Hagiology Seminar, this roundtable will involve participation in a few virtual conversations leading up to an in-person session at the 2025 AAR Annual Meeting.

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

- Aaron Hollander
ahollander@geii.org
- Todd French
tfrench@rollins.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Hindu Philosophy Unit

Call for Proposals

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 in Boston:

1. Philosophical Roundtable. This format brings together several participants to discuss a single philosophical argument or closely related set of arguments. This year's roundtable will focus on yogic perception, or the idea that certain people have direct knowledge of objects or truths beyond the reach of ordinary sense-perception. Our starting-point will be Kumāriḷa's arguments, in the *Ślokavārttika*, against the possibility of yogic perception. Participants are welcome to consider responses (or possible responses) from any philosophical school (Yoga, Jaina, Nyāya, Vedānta, etc.). 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 instead invite prospective participants to offer a short assessment of Kumāriḷa's arguments, either on their own or with reference to another thinker or school.

2. Traditional Papers Session. For this session we are looking for individual paper proposals rather than full panel proposals. This year's annual theme for AAR, "freedom," is especially relevant to Hindu philosophical traditions, so we especially encourage proposals on this topic (which, in addition to traditional discussions of *mokṣa*, might also include modern political philosophy, theological discussions of divine freedom and/or human free will, etc.). We are also open to proposals on other topics, including but not limited to verbal testimony, omniscience, mereology, "*darśana*" as a category, philosophical discussions of skill/expertise, philosophy of language, philosophy and literature, and philosophy in vernacular texts.

[3. Co-sponsored Session on Hindu and Islamic Philosophy.](#) We also seek papers for a possible co-sponsored session with the Islamic Mysticism unit exploring Hindu and Islamic philosophy (including philosophical theology and mysticism) in a comparative light. Proposals need not be explicitly comparative; they may focus instead on a single theme or thinker from either tradition, though all papers must be accessible to non-specialists. Each proposal should focus on either a clearly defined topic (e.g., the nature of the soul, divine freedom and/or human free will, "non-dualism"/"monism" as comparative categories, the status of universals, divine causality, proofs of God's existence) or a clearly articulated question (e.g., "What does it mean to 'know' something?", "How do beings endure through time?"). Contact person: Michael S. Allen, msa2b@virginia.edu.

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 Allen³, University of Virginia
msa2b@virginia.edu
- Parimal G. Patil, Harvard University
ppatil@fas.harvard.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Hinduism Unit

Call for Proposals

New Books in Hindu Studies

Contact: Sohini Pillai (sohini.pillai@kzoo.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 Sohini Pillai.

Hinduism in the Anthropocene

Contact: Gaurika Mehta (gmehta@scu.edu)

How are Hindu communities, rituals, practices, myths and sacred places impacted by and/or implicated in debates surrounding the Anthropocene, our current era of human-inflicted climate change? For this panel, we invite scholars to think about how pollution, climate disasters (flooding, frequent cyclones, landslides, forest fires), changes in agriculture and tourism, mining, energy extraction, and deforestation affect Hindu communities in South Asia and the diaspora. Topics might include (but are not limited to): 1) ritual adaptations and challenges, 2) polluted/sacred geography, 3) Hinduism, caste, and climate change, 4) relationships between the human and non-human, 5) emergence and circulation of apocalyptic prophecies and conspiracy theories, 6) Hindu

nationalism and tourism, 7) theories and methods in the study of Hinduism and the Anthropocene.

Caste and Capitalism (possible co-sponsorship with Religion and Economy Unit)

Contact: Deonnie Moodie (dmoodie@ou.edu)

This session seeks papers on the relationship between caste and capitalism, exploring the ways that the phenomena and structures of caste have been and are used in modernity to advance the material aims of capitalism. Papers may consider things such as how new caste formations have been created and leveraged in capitalist contexts, as well as how anti-caste thought and activist responses to capitalism.

Educating Hindus

Contact: Shana Sippy (shana.sippy@centre.edu)

This panel seeks papers that explore the rituals, pedagogies, philosophies, and politics of Hindu education in modernity. What are the modes, methods, and aims of Hindu inculcation in different contexts, whether in South Asia or diaspora? How have new technologies and modes of education (bala vihars, camps, youth groups, Gita competitions, virtual platforms) transformed modes of making Hindus?

Teaching Introduction to Hinduism: A Roundtable and/or Workshop

Contact: Sowparnika Balaswaminathan (sowparnika.nathan@concordia.ca)

This session seeks to explore novel pedagogical approaches to Introduction to Hinduism. In particular, the panel wishes to consider how Introduction to Hinduism (and related courses) can best incorporate the experiences of diasporic communities, as well as the challenges posed by Hindu nationalism.

Sacred Texts in the Field of Hindu Studies

Contact: Shana Sippy (shana.sippy@centre.edu)

As scholars, we all have those texts that scholars return to again and again. The books with dogeared pages, with endless marginalia, the books that are cited over and over again. This roundtable seeks to explore what those books are for scholars of Hinduism. We seek panelists who want to explore why particular books have a kind of sacred status, what has enabled them to endure and where they fall short. In considering the sacred canon of Hindu Studies, we also hope panelists will consider what it means to

expand the canon and how new questions in the field—whether about such things as class, feminism, caste studies, race, lived religion, ethnography, colonialism, etc.—have prompted canonical reevaluation and even the rejection of sacred texts.

[Mapping and Religious Meaning Making in Hinduism \(possible co-sponsorship with the Arts, Religion, and Literature Unit\)](#)

Contact: George Pati (george.pati@valpo.edu)

This panel seeks to explore a variety of religious cartographies or mappings in Hindu texts and contexts. While mapping is often viewed as a type of pragmatic political or spatial practice, these papers taken together demonstrate ways that map-making functions also as a religious practice, at least in some Hindu texts and lived environments both in India and in the diaspora.

[Bollywood, Hindutva, and Pedagogy \(possible co-sponsorship with SARI, Religion, Media, and Culture Unit\)](#)

Contact: Francesca Chubb-Confer (fchubbco@oberlin.edu)

This roundtable seeks to explore how Bollywood films can be used in classes to teach about contemporary iterations and narratives of Hindutva, as well as portrayals of other forms of political and non-political religion in South Asia.

Towards a Comparative Study of Female Devotional Exemplars (“Saints”) from South Asia.

Contact: Karen Pechilis (kpechili@drew.edu)

We seek scholars who have performed detailed study of historical female saints from South Asia, religion location open. Female saints are of enduring interest to scholars, teachers, and students because they are vibrantly related to poetry, song, life story, and the arts and because they direct attention to the analysis of women and gender in the study of religion. This panel seeks to bring together scholars who are performing detailed study of specific historical female saints in order to leverage that new information to rethink the terms of past comparative analysis and its assumptions about women, gender, and devotion, and to identify its implications for theorizing devotion generally today. The group will together decide what aspect of freedom (the AAR 2025 theme) to emphasize in the comparison.

Fieldwork Entanglements in Today's India

Contact: Emilia Bachrach (ebachrac@oberlin.edu)

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-a-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.

Lived Hinduism in Diaspora

Contact: Justin Grosnick (jgrosnick@ses.gtu.edu)

From the early South Asian movements into Southeast Asia to its more recent ventures to Africa, the Americas, and Europe, Hinduism continues to become not only a more global tradition, but one of even greater diversity. Looking to the Hindu diaspora, this panel addresses how Hindu traditions take on new lives as they shift between locales and cultures--and amongst people--outside of South Asia. We invite scholars to offer papers on how Hindu traditions are re-presented, re-embodied, or how they expand and intermingle with the people, materials, and cultures they find. We hope such reflections will shed new light and understanding on the term "Hinduism" and what it means as a term used in dialogue between devotees outside and within South Asia.

Politics and Positionality in the Hindu Studies Classroom

Contact: Jenn Ortgren: (jennortgren@gmail.com)

This roundtable will consider how the politics and/or political commitments of our students—as they become known to us or are assumed by us—may reshape our teaching in ways that may feel productive and/or problematic. Imagined largely as a pedagogy roundtable, we can use this space to share experiences, insights, and

strategies as well as questions and concerns about addressing politics and positionality in the contemporary classroom. .

World-Affirming Liberative Hindu Theologies

Contact: Charissa Jaeger-Sanders (cjaeger-sanders@ses.gtu.edu)

In keeping with the 2025 Presidential Theme of "Freedom," how is the theological concept *mokṣa*, which comes from the Sanskrit verbal root $\sqrt{\text{muc}}$, which is often translated as "to free, to release," understood? What might it look like to have world-affirming liberative Hindu theologies that celebrate *mokṣa* that includes freedom and justice for not only humanity here and now but also for the more than human realm?

Nature as Sacred: The Role of Hindu Practices in Promoting Environmental Conservation

Contact: Somya Ayyar (sowmyaayyar.bhuphd@gmail.com)

This panel seeks to build upon previous panels exploring the relationship between Hindu traditions and environmentalism, particularly in light of the climate crisis. Papers may include the role of Hindu rituals and philosophies in advancing sustainability and conservation.

Theistic Hinduism: Conceptions of the Divine in Contemporary Hinduism

Contact: Jess Navarette (jess.navarette@bc.edu)

This panel seeks proposals and papers that represent contemporary Hindu traditions which have a theistic focus (non-Advaitic traditions). What is the concept of "God" in a particular strain of Hinduism, and how does it vary from others? How does it reconcile the pantheon of Hindu Deities and scriptures? What are the authorities and interpretations that inform this tradition? This panel seeks a diverse representation from scholars and/or practitioners to give voice to various traditions in an inter-Hindu discourse.

The Languages of Hinduism

Contact: Manasicha Akepiyapornchai (ma.ake@austin.utexas.edu)

This panel seeks to highlight the many languages of Hinduism beyond Sanskrit and the primary vernaculars of academic study. Seeking papers that study Hinduism through

the lens of regional or vernacular languages that are less frequently studied. The Languages of Hinduism: This panel seeks to highlight the many languages of Hinduism beyond Sanskrit and the primary vernaculars of academic study. Seeking papers that study Hinduism through the lens of regional or vernacular languages that are less frequently studied.

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

- Shana Sippy, Centre College
shana@sippys.net
- Varun Khanna, Swarthmore College
vrkhanna@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

History of Christianity Unit

Call for Proposals

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 Christianity
- Incarceration in Early Christianity
- Ancient Christianity in Africa
- Pedagogical proposals related to:
 - Teaching about Christian nationalism
 - Teaching ancient texts / premodern Christianities
 - Digital Humanities
- Proposals reflecting on the 1700th anniversary/legacy of the First Council of Nicaea
- Proposals reflecting on the 500th anniversary/legacy of the founding of the Anabaptist movement
- Proposals reflecting on the 100th anniversary/legacy of the Scopes trial
- Proposals reflecting on the legacy of Vatican II
- Martyrdom in the Christian tradition
- Methodology and sources for teaching and researching Christianity
- Media production in the spread of Christianity (ancient and modern)

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 junior and established scholars in the field.

Chairs

- Minji Lee
minjiha2@gmail.com
- Roy Fisher, Loyola Marymount University
roy.fisher@lmu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Unit

Call for Proposals

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, investigations of access to technology using the analytics of politics, disability, and power.

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

- The relationship between AI and transhumanism
- Engaged theological perspectives on the role of human enhancement technologies.
- The role of technocrats in human enhancement and transhumanism

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@iu.edu
- Victoria Lorrimar
vicki@lorrimar.id.au

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Unit

Call for Proposals

For the June meeting we encourage you to submit abstracts for very brief (3-4 minutes) presentations on the theme of Fascination and Fabrication in Human Enhancement and Transhumanism. Presenters will speak in the manner of an "adult show and tell," with the aim being to introduce the audience to what has been most influential in the lives and work of scholars of human enhancement. The focus of the participant may be, for example, a person, work of scholarship, artifact, technology, event, or fictional creation. Our theme this year for the online conference builds off of last year's theme of increasing access in the field, providing opportunities to share and to hear brief and impactful presentations.

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@iu.edu
- Victoria Lorrimar
vicki@lorrimar.id.au

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Indian and Chinese Religions in Dialogue Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

Call for Panel and Paper Proposals 2025:

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

Aesthetics in Indian and Chinese Religions:

Co-sponsored with Yogācāra Unit

This panel explores approaches to aesthetics in South Asian and East Asian traditions to promote an interreligious and intercultural dialogues on taste, beauty, and nature, broadly construed.

Contact: Jingjing Li

j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl

Cakravartins: Violence, Liberation and the Path to Freedom:

Contact: Jessica Zu

xzu@usc.edu

Children in Art in Indian and Chinese Religions:

We are seeking interdisciplinary and, ideally, transregional papers that explore children as active participants in religious practices and as individuals possessing or seeking spiritual advancement. Children may be defined broadly, in terms of biophysical development and/or socio-familial relations, thus papers that discuss parent-child relations are also welcome. We especially encourage submissions that take a comparative approach, engaging with both India and China, and that incorporate art historical or visual perspectives. To express interest, please email both panel co-organizers Dessie Vendova (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) <d.vendova@columbia.edu> AND Kelly Carlton (Princeton) <kcarlton@princeton.edu>.

Prana and Qi:

The panel brings together experts in religious studies, philosophy, and medicine to examine the convergences and divergences between qi (氣) and prāṇa across East and South Asian traditions.

Contact: Eyal Aviv

aviv@gwu.edu

Silk Routes:

This panel invites papers that consider exchanges, dialogues and differences between Indian and Chinese religious thought and practices through land and maritime Silk Routes. We welcome historical and contemporary perspectives and a range of disciplinary approaches, from philosophy and material culture, to texts and politics.

Contact Karen O'Brien-Kop

Karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk

Pramāṇa between India and China

Contact: Yat Ching Yeung

yat.ching.yeung@temple.edu

The Buddhist conception of the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) was systemized by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti in India. Their ideas spread to China with different linguistic adaptations and philosophical discussion. This panel delves into the transmission, key translations, and commentaries in Chinese, examining how Indian Buddhist theories of knowledge were interpreted, integrated, and transformed within the cultural and intellectual landscape. It hopes to explore the value and difficulties of this cross-cultural dialogue.

The Chinese *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*

Contact: Chris Jones

christopher.jones@univie.ac.at

Unit statement: 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
aviv@gwu.edu
- Karen O'Brien-Kop, University of Roehampton
karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit

Call for Proposals

For the AAR 2025 in Boston, we particularly welcome Indigenous paper and panel proposals relating to any of the following topics:

- Institutional change in terms of programs for teaching and researching Indigenous Religious Traditions.
- [War on immigrants, safety and sanctuary, societal change, protection of vulnerable populations. Possible co-sponsorship with Human Rights Unit, Religion and Migration Unit.](#)
- Safety in the Academy: Reckoning, Public institutions responsibility, and working ethically with undocumented students. The examination of Indigenous

communal initiatives to undermine any violence against Indigenous immigrants, the Lands, waters, and other-than-human beings.

- [Extraction](#): its meaning, methods, politics, and economics in the study of religion. 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. Possible Co-sponsored session with Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, Religion and Ecology Unit, and Native Traditions of the Americas Unit, International Development and Religion Unit
- Sustaining Environmental Change: In the face of climate disaster, how do we make sense of survival of ourselves and the planet, and environmental justice about cultural and spiritual beliefs and ceremonial practices? Currently, the earth is in an apparent radical transition, resisting and responding to human impact in myriad tumultuous ways. 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.
- "Author Meets Critic Series" Any significant books published in the last three years relevant for discussion by a diverse group of scholars? Suggest them to us!

The Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit invites papers, regardless of fitting a specific call above, highlighting any concerns about 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, and Indigenous futurism and settler futures in terms of reparations, etc. We especially encourage papers exploring the movement's broad perspective regarding restitution, decoloniality, and protection of traditions, lands, ecosystems, and relations.

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
- Seth Schermerhorn, Hamilton College
jscherme@hamilton.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit

Call for Proposals

The Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit gathers scholars, educators, researchers, and spiritual care providers to explore chaplaincy in both traditional and emerging settings. We welcome papers from a variety of perspectives and locations. In 2025 we are particularly interested in:

Innovations at the Liberatory Edges

What does spiritual care look like in spaces and climates of *unfreedom*? The AAR Presidential theme of “Freedom,” and the meeting location of Boston, where Rev. Howard Thurman (whose non-violent, interfaith, interracial vision of peace was inspired by Gandhi) was Dean of the Chapel at Boston University prompt us to ask: How can chaplains intervene when lives are at risk, recognition of common humanity and dignity are lost, species extinction accelerates, and persons of color disproportionately suffer imprisonment, deportation, and inadequate healthcare? What spiritual and moral voices of justice, compassion, or love offer methods and vision for what spiritual care may be?

Innovations at the Professional Frontiers

How are changes across political, legal, educational, and economic landscapes – from licensing for spiritual care, to psychedelic research and regulations, to clinical pastoral education outcomes, and uses of “religion” vis a vis freedom, democracy, and the First Amendment – impacting the fields of spiritual care and chaplaincy? What do we need to be aware of on the horizon, and what are individuals and institutions adding to their toolkits?

Innovations in Perspectives – Sourcing Wisdom and Care from the Margins of the Field Muslim, Hindu, Humanist, Pagan, and Buddhist, “minority” chaplains are shifting from the privately undertaken work ‘internal translation’ to navigate and spiritually negotiate educational and clinical spaces toward translating publicly their sourcing from their canonical texts, foundational teachings, or orienting systems into contributions to contemporary chaplaincy praxis. What does it sound like for non-Judeo-Christian Spiritual Care providers to also meet educational outcomes, professional standards of care, and engage in ‘theological’ reflection on their work, in their own words?

Co-sponsored session with SBL on prison chaplaincy focused on Sarah Jobe’s *new book No God Forsaken Place: Prison Chaplaincy, Karl Barth and Practicing Life in Prison* (Forthcoming from T&T Clark in the Spring of 2025) (contact Aaron Klink aaron.klink@duke.edu)

[Co-sponsored session with Buddhism in the West and/or Buddhist Critical Constructive Reflection:](#) panel, roundtable, or paper proposals welcome, related broadly to intersections of Buddhist thought, practice, communities, texts, and research methods with pastoral theories, professional practices, and contexts of spiritual care/chaplaincy, or specifically, Buddhist traditional and secularized practices and texts that demonstrably benefit chaplains and their care recipients. (contact: Leigh Miller, program@maitripa.org)

We welcome papers on any topic related to chaplaincy and spiritual care including but not limited to: training and educational pathways for work in these fields, the interfaith aspects of chaplaincy and spiritual care, models for interfaith spiritual care that emerge out of a specific religious, theological, or historical tradition, research on chaplaincy and spiritual care in a variety of settings including prisons, hospitals, the military, universities, and businesses, and expanding to political movements and other growing sectors for chaplaincy, navigating difference in spiritual care along lines of race, sexuality, gender identity, class, religious tradition, and experience. The above topics are simply a glimpse at the wide breadth of possible topics. Our unit is interested in all

cutting-edge research and critical reflection on the fields of chaplaincy and spiritual care from both scholars and practitioners.

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

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
- Leigh Miller, Maitripa College
program@maitripa.org

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[International Development and Religion Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

[Co-sponsored panel with Religion and the Social Sciences Unit:](#)

[Religion and Development 2025-2030](#)

The next five years will be a momentous and potentially tumultuous time for development agendas. In the run up to the end of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030 and the incoming Trump administration in the US and its effects on international development funding and practices, shifts in our understandings of faith-based development, localization, the role of local faith actors, freedom of religion and belief, and strategic religious engagement are likely to evolve. We are interested in papers that speak to these evolutions:

- The effects on FBOs of shifts in development policy between US administrations
- The effects of religious freedom framings on development as a priority area of interest under Trump administrations
- A focus on local faith actors and localization in humanitarian and development work
- How strategic religious engagement is being conceived and implemented in development practice
- Planning for 2030 and how to include faith actors in the post-2030 agenda
- Reflections on faith actor roles in advocacy for an implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and what should be learned for post-2030

[Co-sponsored panel with the Religion and Migration Unit:](#)

[Religion and Climate Migration](#)

Changes in environments – often a consequence of rapid and radical anthropogenic climate change – are an increasingly important driver of migration. Despite a consensus among scholars that the environmental impact on migration is difficult to measure, its significance for the movement of people across the globe needs to be studied. This co-sponsored session seeks proposals that explore the nexus between religion and climate migration from both empirical and explanatory angles, including normative questions. We are interested in

1. case study examples of religious beliefs and practices affecting and being affected by climate migration;

2. the collaboration of faith-based organizations in humanitarian and development interventions for climate migrants;
3. the contribution that different and diverse faith traditions make to emerging normative frameworks that aim to address the governance of climate migration; and
4. the challenge that climate migration poses to discourse about people on the move, both locally and globally;
5. definitional and conceptual debate on the parameters of this emerging area of research on intersections of religion and climate migration.

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

- Olivia Wilkinson
oliviajwilkinson@gmail.com
- Christopher Duncanson-Hales, University of Sudbury
theolog3n1@gmail.com

International Development and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

The State of Religion and International Development

We welcome papers on any topic connected to religions and international development. In 2025, we are interested in convening discussions on the state of our field, and including insights from those in both research and practice.

It is now over 20 years since religions and development-specific publications, conferences, and research projects started emerging and collating into a research area. We aim to provoke debate on the state of our field as a whole and interrogate where we should consolidate work or branch into new territory. The following questions can be a guide:

- What is the state-of-the-art in our field? What is the most cutting edge research?
- What topics in religions and development have seen the most significant growth and improvement over the last five years?
- What topics in religions and development are underdeveloped and need more research in the next five years?
- Does religions and development have enough research and researchers working in the area to count as its own field or discipline? What would define the parameters of religions and development as a field?
- How do we represent the “evidence base” in religions and development to policy makers and practitioners? Where have people got the “right” message about the evidence and where do inconsistencies and misconceptions lie?

We welcome submissions on these and any other related topics, including:

- Religion, conflict, and peacebuilding
- Gender, religion, and development outcomes
- Religious motivations and development practice
- Interfaith dialogue and collaboration

We welcome submissions from a diverse range of perspectives, including scholars, practitioners, and faith-based leaders.

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

- Olivia Wilkinson
oliviajwilkinson@gmail.com
- Christopher Duncanson-Hales, University of Sudbury
theolog3n1@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

Weaponization of Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is recognized as an essential human right. Yet claims of religious liberty are also used to justify discrimination against women, LGBTQ+ individuals, religious minorities, and others. We sometimes see interfaith alliances collaborating to undermine civil rights protections. High-profile disputes over insurance coverage of contraceptives and abortion raise questions about the individuals' liberties, often sacrificed to the claims of religious institutions or even private companies.

Lawmakers wield "religious liberty" to impose their own religious beliefs, both explicitly and unacknowledged, restricting the lives and freedoms of others. We have also witnessed concerns about religious bigotry being used as a shield against criticism and a challenge to freedom of speech and assembly. How do we guard individual liberties and group practices while resisting the increasing weaponization of religious freedom?

We invite paper and panel proposals that address these problematic developments. As a unit devoted to Interreligious and Interfaith Studies, we are particularly interested in the impact on our multifaith context and encounters across religious difference. If you are proposing a panel, please ensure that your panelists represent a range of lifestances.

Interactive Workshop

Based on the success of our previous 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:

- Recent Publications in the Field: Discuss your own work or review significant new contributions
- Mysticism and Multiple Religious Participation
- Secularisms and Religious Diversity
- Nones, Nothing in Particulars, Unaffiliated and Indifferent in religiously diverse societies
- Graduate Student Education in Interreligious Studies
- Syllabus Design and Exchange: Share your own syllabus and/or those of others teaching in the field to examine various approaches.

- Interreligious Studies and Interfaith Engagement in Context: public/private institutions, urban/rural settings, religious/secular universities, religiously diverse/homogenous student bodies
- 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 and Models of Interreligious Engagement

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

[60th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate](#)

2025 marks the 60th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the groundbreaking Vatican II declaration on the Church's relationship with non-Christian religions. To commemorate this milestone, the Interreligious and Interfaith Studies, Religion in Europe, and Vatican II units invite proposals for a co-sponsored panel that explores the enduring significance, challenges, and future implications of Nostra Aetate in European, North American, and other contexts.

We welcome papers that critically engage with the following themes:

- The historical and political context of Nostra Aetate and its development.
- The impact of Nostra Aetate on Christian-Jewish, Christian-Muslim, or other interfaith relations.
- The role of Nostra Aetate in shaping Catholic and interreligious dialogue today.
- The reception of Nostra Aetate by non-Christian religious communities and secular actors.
- The relevance of Nostra Aetate in contemporary Europe amidst rising secularization, religious pluralism, and global challenges such as Islamophobia and antisemitism.
- Critical perspectives on the limitations of Nostra Aetate, including voices marginalized by its framework.

This panel aims to foster a rich, interdisciplinary dialogue that examines how Nostra Aetate has shaped and continues to shape interreligious dynamics and religious identities in an increasingly pluralistic world.

Proposals from diverse disciplinary and methodological perspectives are encouraged. Please submit your proposal through the AAR's PAPERS system by the specified deadline.

Statement of Purpose

"The field of Interreligious Studies (IRS) entails critical analysis of the dynamic encounters – historical and contemporary, intentional and unintentional, embodied and imagined, congenial and conflictual – of individuals and communities who orient around religion differently. It investigates the complex of personal, interpersonal, institutional, and societal implications" (Rachel Mikva, *Interreligious Studies: An Introduction*)

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. 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

- Anne Hege Grung, University of Oslo
annehg@teologi.uio.no
- Feryal Salem
fsalem@aicusa.edu

[Islam, Gender, Women Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

The IGW program unit will not participate in the virtual AAR meeting in June of 2025.

This Call for Proposals is for the November meeting in Boston only.

New Books in the Study of Women and Gender in Islamic Studies

In keeping with our commitment to non-traditional programming, the 2025 IGW session will showcase recently published (since 2019) books of significance for the study of women and gender in Islamic studies. We envision a session in which 5 to 6 scholars propose to discuss a recent book (not their own work) they have found relevant for the field in ways that go beyond a simple focus on women and/or gender. Instead, we seek books that offer methodological and theoretical innovation, addressing broader questions of authority, tradition, feminism, and decoloniality. The goal of the session is to put the books (and potentially their authors) in conversation with each other and with scholars in the field of gender in Islamic studies.

The proposal, submitted through PAPERS, should be written like a book review that responds to all FOUR of the following prompts (each about 250 words, so the full proposal is 1000 words):

1. Provide a summary of the book including the core arguments and explain how the book's structure and the arrangement of chapters shape and clarify these arguments.
2. Identify and analyze the book's methodological and theoretical contributions, significance, or interventions.
3. Formulate key questions the book raises, particularly regarding gendered authority, tradition, feminism, and decoloniality.
4. Reflect on how the book advances the field and informs your own research.

The session at the annual meeting in November will feature brief presentations on the books, followed by table-based discussions focused on each book.

[Co-sponsored Session: Teaching Specific Readings on Women and Gender in Islamic Studies in the Undergraduate Classroom](#)

In this session, which will be co-sponsored with the Study of Islam program unit, we envision the presentation of a specific reading assignment (chapter or journal article length) that contributes to teaching gender in Islamic studies. We invite proposals that explain how the instructor has taught/is teaching a particular reading and what kind of assignment accompanies that reading. How does the assignment pedagogically enhance both the reading material assigned and the study of gender? Put another way, why this reading and why this assignment? How do they help an undergraduate better understand the issues surrounding gender and Islamic studies? In the proposal, please indicate the full citation of the reading and explain why you are interested in sharing it with others at the AAR.

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
- Roshan Iqbal
riqbal@agnesscott.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Islamic Mysticism Unit

Call for Proposals

The Islamic Mysticism Group solicits paper and panel proposals for the 2025 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. These can cover any region or time period. 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 gender diversity on the panel. We also greatly encourage other forms of diversity, especially race, ethnicity, theoretical methods, 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) aesthetics; (2) heresiologies and/or Orthodox-Heterodox; (3) teaching or pedagogy of Islamic mysticism (4) political theology (5) comparative Muslim and/or Non-Muslim translations and (6) decolonialization. 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'i 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 and cultures 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
merin.shobhana@gmail.com
- Syed Zaidi, Emory University
syedzaidi.nyc@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Islamic Mysticism Unit

Call for Proposals

The Islamic Mysticism Unit invites papers on the theme of decolonization in the study of Islamic Mysticism. In recent decades, scholars have increasingly examined mystical texts and traditions through the lens of Indigenous and Black studies and postcolonial critique. We welcome papers that explore the history of colonization within the field, as well as efforts to decolonize Islamic Mysticism by reclaiming indigenous voices, challenging Western interpretations, and reconsidering the impact of colonial histories on the study of mysticism.

Statement of Purpose

Islamic mysticism is a broad rubric, one that allows us to engage in areas such as Sufism, Shi'i 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 and cultures 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
merin.shobhana@gmail.com

- Syed Zaidi, Emory University
syedzaidi.nyc@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Jain Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The Jain Studies Unit welcomes suggestions for panel ideas to be included in the AAR 2025 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) and/or Ana Bajzelj (abajzelj@ucr.edu). We especially welcome suggestions for panels to be co-sponsored with other units and for panels that address the 2025 Annual Meeting's Presidential Theme: "Freedom." 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 December 13, 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.

November In-Person Meeting:

- Amṛtacandra and His Works (Jinesh Sheth, jineshrsheth13@gmail.com)
- *Caityavāsins, Yatis, Bhaṭṭārakas*: Revisiting Jain 'Semi-Renouncers' (Tillo Detige, tillodetige@gmail.com, and Anchit Jain, jn.anchit@gmail.com)
- [Contours of Freedom: Jain Approaches to Contemplation and Self-Realization](#) (Alba Rodriguez, alba.rodriguezjuan@email.ucr.edu), possible co-sponsorship with Contemplative Studies Unit
- [Engaged Jainism \(SUNY Forthcoming\) Sitting on the Lotus of Engaged Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Book Review Roundtable](#) (Christopher Miller,

christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org), possible co-sponsorship with Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit

- Gender, Women, and Identity: From Texts to Contemporary Shifts (Shivani Bothra, Shivani.Bothra@csulb.edu, and Venu Mehta, ymehta@cst.edu)
- Language of the Gods in the World of Jinas: Jainas and Sanskrit (Seema Chauhan, seemachauhan490@gmail.com)
- The Non-One-Sidedness of *Anekāntavāda* (Raja Rosenhagen, rosenhagen@mail.fresnostate.edu)

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
- Gregory Clines, Trinity University
gclines@trinity.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Jain Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The Jain Studies Unit welcomes suggestions for panel ideas to be included in the AAR 2025 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) and/or Ana Bajzelj

(abajzelj@ucr.edu). We especially welcome suggestions for panels to be co-sponsored with other units and for panels that address the 2025 Annual Meeting's Presidential Theme: "Freedom." 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 December 13, 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.

Online Summer Session:

- Jainism and Technology (Corinne Smith, 257635@soas.ac.uk)
- Jain Texts on Conduct (Alba Rodriguez, alba.rodriquezjuan@email.ucr.edu)

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
- Gregory Clines, Trinity University
gclines@trinity.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Japanese Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

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 "[Freedom](#)." 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:

"Shinto Ritual" Mariangela Carpinteri (m_carpinteri@umail.ucsb.edu)

"Body/Embodiment in Japanese Religions, time period open" Gwendolyn Gillson (gwendolyn.gillson@ic.edu)

"Gender and Sexuality in Japanese Religions" Dana Mirsalis (danamirsalis@pacificu.edu)

"Japanese Religions in the Edo Period" Matt Mitchell (mmitche4@highpoint.edu)

["Women Leaders in New Religious Movements."](#) Tori Montrose (vmontrose@furman.edu) (possible co-sponsorship with the New Religious Movements unit)

"ESGs and Japanese Religions" Mark Rowe (rowemar@mcmaster.ca)

["East Asian Self-Cultivation Practices in Transnational Perspective"](#) Justin Stein (justin.stein@kpu.ca) (possible quad-sponsored between Japanese Religions, Chinese Religions, Korean Religions, and Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society)

This panel proposal invites scholars interested in discussing the utility of the concept of "self-cultivation" (in dialogue with the categories of "religion," "(East) Asia," and/or "Asian American") for the field of religious studies, and explore its potential evolution as a concept and discipline.

"Humor and Laughter in Japanese Religions" Eric Swanson (Eric.Swanson@lmu.edu)

["Popular Culture and Japanese Religions."](#) Kaitlyn Ugoretz (kugoretz@ucsb.edu) (with the Religion and Popular Culture Unit)

We invite proposals that consider how popular culture acts as a medium for religious expression and expression about religion with reference to Japan. We are interested in works that span mediums (movies, television, music, games, material culture), time periods, and places of production/consumption.

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 and Takashi Miura at 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

- Jessica Starling
jessie.starling@gmail.com
- Takashi Miura, University of Arizona
tmiura@email.arizona.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Jewish Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The Jewish Studies Unit provides a designated home for work on Jews, Judaism, and Jewish studies, broadly conceived. This Unit also supports Jewish studies scholarship being represented in a wide range of units across the AAR. We welcome proposals for individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtables that address topics of concern to the broader community of religious studies scholars, from late antiquity to the present, in multiple global settings, and employing various methodologies. 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 Jewish studies, although for 2025, we are particularly interested in the following topics:

- Teaching Judaism/Jewish studies in contemporary contexts
- Judaism, nationalism, and Jewish nationalism
- Transhistorical approaches to Jewish rituals and practices
- Judaism and the more-than-human world, including ecology, animal others, and/or the posthuman
- Jewish-Catholic relations, marking 60 years since Nostra Aetate

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 Judaism in its various contexts.

Chairs

- Andrea Dara Cooper
adcooper@email.unc.edu
- Jennifer Caplan
caplanjr@ucmail.uc.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Karl Barth Society of North America

Call for Proposals

“Karl Barth and Freedom”

The Karl Barth Society of North America seeks papers on the topic of freedom, broadly construed. Papers may consider the meaning(s) of freedom—divine and creaturely—in any of Barth’s writings and at any stage of his scholarly career. Papers that engage central theological issues are very welcome; also welcome are reflections on Barth’s work as it relates broader concerns in the past and present.

“Karl Barth and Black Theology: Retrospect and Prospect”

The Karl Barth Society of North America seeks papers on the topic of Karl Barth and Black theology. Papers can engage any of Barth’s writings in relation to the field of Black theology, broadly construed, in the past and the present. Our hope is to convene a panel that looks backward *and* forward, reflecting on key moments in years gone by and thinking generatively about scholarship in the years to come.

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).

Chairs

- Cambria Kaltwasser, Northwestern College, Orange City
cambria.kaltwasser@nwcsiowa.edu
- Paul Dafydd Jones
pdj5c@virginia.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Unit

Call for Proposals

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 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
barrettl@moravian.edu
- Nigel Hatton
nhatton@ucmerced.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Korean Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

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 March 1, 2025, 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.

Prophets or Perpetrators? The Role of Korean Religions in Systems of Oppression and Liberation.

Organizer: Shinjae Lee (leeaqj@bc.edu)

How have religious leaders, movements, and communities in Korea navigated the tangled web of justice and injustice? From revolutionary uprisings to quiet acts of defiance, from reinforcing power structures to challenging them, Korean religious traditions have left indelible marks on the moral fabric of society. The Korean Religions Unit invites you to delve into the theme: Prophets or Perpetrators? The Role of Korean Religions in Systems of Oppression and Liberation. We seek bold, creative, and interdisciplinary explorations that uncover how Korean religions—past and present, local and diasporic—have resisted, perpetuated, or ignored oppression while shaping societal struggles and aspirations for justice. What insights do these traditions reveal about suffering and liberation? What tensions arise when religious leadership, movements, or beliefs confront the world’s inequities? We encourage interdisciplinary and comparative approaches, including theological, sociological, historical, anthropological, and literary analyses. Proposals can engage with Buddhist reforms, shamanistic rituals, Confucian ethics, Christian activism, or new religious movements.

Assessing Recent Scholarship about Korean Religions

Organizer: Timothy Lee (t.lee@tcu.edu)

The panel seeks to review how Korean religions have been studied in English over the past twenty-five years. Multiple monographs, edited volumes, and sourcebooks on Korean religions have been published in this period. The time is ripe for us to take stock of these works and review how Korean religions have been studied in English since the turn of the twenty-first century. In this vein, we invite proposals in which the author makes the case as to why certain scholars and their works are significant for understanding one of the main traditions of Korean religions: shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, or new religions and proposals in which the author assesses works that treat a particular religious dimension—e.g., ritual, emotion (experience), myth (narrative), doctrine (beliefs), ethics (law), social (institution), and material—as it has been manifested in two or more Korean religious traditions.

Co-sponsored panel with the Japanese Religions Unit

[East Asian Self-Cultivation Practices in Transnational Perspective](#)

Organizer: Justin Stein: (justin.stein@kpu.ca)

Practices of self-cultivation 修養 (*xiuyang, suyang, shūyō*) / 修身 (*xiushen, susin, shūshin*) have a long history within East Asian religion, medicine, education, and arts (especially martial arts), as a means to foster perfection of the self, physical health, moral development, and social harmony. These practices often emphasize *qi / ki* 氣 — the basic “stuff” of existence, often understood as a life force — as a vehicle for harmonizing the individual body-mind with universal principles and cosmic forces. While these self-cultivation practices evoke and invoke East Asian homelands, and have long circulated across intra-regional borders, they also circulate in wide-reaching transnational currents, including in Asian diasporas and in the so-called New Age movement, interacting with forces like race, orientalism, and empire. This panel invites scholars who are interested in a conversation regarding the use of the concept of “self-cultivation” in dialogue with the categories of “religion,” “(East) Asia,” and/or “Asian American” to discuss its utility for the field of religious studies, and explore its potential evolution 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, or Liora Sarfati 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
ckim@ucmo.edu
- Liora Sarfati
lsarfati@tauex.tau.ac.il

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Language, Poiesis, and Buddhist Experiments with the Possible Seminar

Call for Proposals

Seminar description

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 2025 AAR Annual Meeting we invite proposals on the theme:

Poiesis and Poetics in the Sinographic Sphere

This year, we will investigate the role and meaning of language and its forms of expression—poetic foremost—in the sinographic sphere, where the Literary Sinitic Buddhist canon was used and shaped, whether in Buddhist or Buddhist-adjacent traditions such as Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, and others. This will serve as a complement to last year’s discussion of early South Asian poetics. Last year was the root; this year, the branches.

Our focus will be on poetic language from its earliest manifestations through the early modern period (18th century), including verse genres in Literary Sinitic (*shi, fu, zan, ming*, etc.) and the vernacular literary traditions that emerged in relation to it (Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Tangut, Manchu, etc.).

In each proposal, we ask that authors explicitly address the moment of poiesis—the moment in which something is newly created or transformed through language or in language, in a play between the infinite openness of possibilities for expression and meaning on the one hand, and on the other hand their inevitable reduction into concrete choices, utterances, meanings. In your material, what is the innovation or transformation, on any scale, that occurs through language and in language? We ask our authors to discuss the moment of poiesis they have identified through the framework of the following three key aspects and their interrelations: 1) the compositional style and process, 2) the local/immediate context, and 3) the dynamics that made it possible to adopt innovation, e.g. historical developments, literary considerations, or doctrinal underpinnings that may have shaped the audience's/interlocutors' openness to the change and their reaction to it.

We invite proposals for papers within this framework, with the following suggested as possible themes:

The historical emergence of Buddhist poetics, and how these were related to their broad—often not Buddhist—literary, social, practical, or doctrinal contexts. In particular, how do these forms of expression stand in relation to Buddhist world views, monastic and ritualistic contexts, or linguistic and literary practices during this formative period?

The role of sound and its relationship to script, be it literary, ritual, doctrinal, or other kinds of texts. How did the chanting of poems, scriptures, spells, liturgies create or move people, create new pathways, envisage new worlds? In what ways did authorities attempt to regulate the soundscape, and how did practitioners evade them?

The role of contemplative practices. How were contemplative practices described, mediated by, or embodied in verse and how did such uses of language create new realities or restructure existing ones? In what ways did poetry shape the interrelationships between the landscapes of environment, body, emotion, society, or cosmos?

Papers may be single or co-authored; they will be pre-circulated among this year's seminar participants and orally presented at one of our sessions. We aim to have short papers (up to 20 minutes) with 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.

Deadline:

All proposals should be submitted via [PAPERS](#) between Monday, January 27th and Monday, March 3rd when the CFP closes.

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 poietic, 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
nlin@shin-ibs.edu
- Roy Tzohar
roytzo@tauex.tau.ac.il

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit

Call for Proposals

Latina/o Religion, Culture and Society Program Unit

Call for Papers 2025

1. Browning the Army of God: Religion and the Rise of the Latino Far-Right
 - 2-hour Session with Business Meeting

Over the last twenty years, Latinos in the United States have embraced far-right politics at an unprecedented rate. The percentage of Latinos who voted for Donald Trump swelled from 29% in 2016, to 32% in 2020, and then to 42% in 2024 (www.as-coa.org). This electoral trend continues to bewilder political pundits, frustrate progressive activists, and confound religious leaders. Underlying this confusion is an apparent contradiction: Trumpism perceived not as oppressive, but rather, as a symbol of freedom. It raises a pressing question: Why has Trumpism, an authoritarian political movement rooted in white supremacy, found a home in many Latino communities? The LRCS unit therefore invites scholars to critically examine the forces driving the increasing alignment of Latinos with far-right movements.

In *Defectors: The Rise of the Latino Far Right and What It Means for America*, investigative reporter Paola Ramos details how evangelical pastors have become instrumental power brokers in the MAGA movement, even launching far-right candidates into public office in predominantly Latino districts that historically vote Democratic. Convinced that Trump is “Making America Godly Again,” Latino evangelical leaders have successfully recruited congregation members into ‘God’s Army’ by decrying LGBTQ+ rights as a moral crisis and migration from the Global South as an existential threat to American culture. Looking to the future, Ramos suggests that as the U.S. transitions to being a minority-majority nation, Latinos – and other people of color – must embrace ideologies of

whiteness if existing hegemonic structures, regardless of which political party is in power, are to survive.

To develop a nuanced understanding of this phenomenon and explore its alternatives, the LRCS unit welcomes proposals that analyze the role of religion in the rise of the Latino far-right. We invite proposals that focus on one or more of the following themes:

- theological critiques of White Christian Nationalism
 - Replacement Theory / Nativism / immigration
 - politics of assimilation / anti-Blackness / colorism
 - global capitalism and the “American Dream” / mythologies of individualism
 - impact of Latin America’s colonial history
 - anti-LGBTQ+ rights / reproductive rights as moral crisis
 - progressive social movements / class solidarity / labor organizing
 - role of social media/WhatsApp in disinformation or mobilization campaigns
2. Ecofeminist Approaches to Liberation: Displacement, Disaster, and Geographic Inequalities
- 2-hour Session with Business Meeting

Latiné and immigrant communities in the United States are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation fueled by global patriarchal and capitalist systems. These structural forces not only exacerbate geographic inequalities but also render marginalized communities increasingly vulnerable to climate-related disasters. These disasters—rooted in systemic neglect and exclusion—expose how government responses fail to address the basic human needs of marginalized communities.

In the current neoliberal era, marginalized communities are frequently scapegoated, further deepening their precarity, displacement, and erasure. Anti-immigrant discourses framing these communities as burdens to social services only intensify their vulnerability during such crises, exposing the intersection of environmental degradation and systemic injustice. The aftermath of Hurricane Helene (September 2024) exemplifies this dynamic. Furthermore, misinformation about federal and state emergency aid discouraged Latiné communities from seeking assistance, due to concerns about incarceration, deportation, and discrimination.

Our unit welcomes papers that use ecofeminist approaches to explore themes of environmental injustice, displacement, and systemic oppression. We invite papers that address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- How anti-immigrant narratives impact access to disaster aid and community resilience.
- Ecofeminist critiques of capitalism and patriarchy in the context of environmental precarity.
- The role of misinformation and state responses in deepening systemic inequalities.
- The intersections of gender, race, and geographic vulnerability in climate crises.
- Activism and community-led strategies for liberation and environmental justice in Latiné and immigrant communities.

By engaging ecofeminism as a lens, this panel aims to highlight pathways to freedom for displaced and marginalized communities within ongoing environmental and social crises.

3. [Seeking Freedom in an Open Wound: Trauma, Memory and Border Crossing in *La Herida Abierta*](#)
 - [90-Minute Co-sponsored Session with Ecclesial Practices unit](#)

The Presidential theme of Freedom provides an opportunity for the Ecclesial Practices Unit and the Latino/a Religion, Culture and Society to explore the emancipatory potential of autoethnography. Critical theorist Gloria Anzaldúa offers an autohistoria-teoría that illustrates how self-historical writing provides critical, analytical and spiritual insights to theorize experiences against repressive socio-cultural discourse.

Our session invites scholars to explore the theme of Freedom by engaging with the one of following topics:

- Embodied Knowledge and Freedom: What role trauma and intergenerational trauma play in narratives of freedom? How does migration, the journey from one location to another in search "to be free", shed light on the individual and communal wounds?
 - Crossing Boundaries and Freedom: How do borders (metaphorical and real) frame and/or constrain the possibilities for liberation?
 - Memory and Legacy of Resistance: How do our ancestral memories and histories shape our understanding of freedom and resistance? What role does collective memory play in the legacies of colonialism, racism and patriarchy and how does it shape our ongoing struggle for freedom?
4. [For Our Freedom, They Must Go! Authoritarianism, Islamophobia, Anti-Latinx Narratives and the Imaginaries of Resistance](#)

- 90-Minute Co-Sponsored Session with Contemporary Islam unit and Religions and Social Conflict unit

At the turn of the 21st century, Samuel Huntington identified the United States as a nation of settlers facing multiple threats to its constitution, including Muslims and Latinx populations. Over the past two decades, both groups have become central targets in the discursive strategies of international fascism, now in power in the US and in multiple spaces throughout the world. In collaboration with the Contemporary Islam, Latino/a Religion, Culture, and Society and Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Studies units, we invite proposals that show entanglements in one or more of these topics:

- Narratives of white genocide and replacement, particularly regarding Muslim and/or Latinx immigration.
 - The new right-wing co-optation of Muslim and/or Latinx populations.
 - New religio-racial perspectives on whiteness in the United States regarding the future inclusion of a “Middle Eastern or North African” designation in the US census.
 - They Are Eternal Foreigners: The denaturalization of longstanding Muslim and/or Latinx histories, memories, or individuals.
 - Conspiracy theories that link Muslim and/or Latino Immigration with a Jewish plot to destroy Western civilization.
 - Religious resistance against state oppression: Cross-cultural, Muslim and/or Latinx experiences.
 - The intersection of Islamophobia and anti-Latinx sentiment with anti-Black racism, Sinophobia, anti-Native racism, and/or antisemitism.
 - Liberationist and decolonial frameworks in resistance to racist and authoritarian structures.
 - Fascism as “colonialism turned inward:” What the US and Europe can learn from Global South struggles?
 - Doctrines of National/International Security, New Red/Green/Brown-scares.
 - Conflictive Narratives of ‘Freedom’ and American consciousness.
 - How white Christian nationalist ideologies use religious texts and myths of racial supremacy to justify the marginalization of non-Christian, immigrant, and racialized groups.
5. [Roundtable Book Panel on *Reckoning with History: Settler Colonialism, Slavery and the Making of American Christianity* by William Yoo \(Westminster/John Knox Press, 2025\)](#)
- 90-Minute Co-Sponsored Session with History of Christianity unit

The Latina/o Religion, Culture and Society unit and the History of Christianity units invite scholars to explore the theme of Freedom by engaging William Yoo's *Reckoning with History* through the lenses of history, theology, and social justice. Panelists should discuss how the legacies of settler colonialism and slavery have shaped—and continue to shape—religious thought, practices, and institutions, particularly within the context of American Christianity. This session calls for critical engagement with the paradoxes of freedom in religious and national narratives.

We encourage panelists to address the following questions: How did Christian theology support systems of oppression such as land dispossession and enslavement while proclaiming a gospel that is inherently liberative? How did Indigenous, Black, or Latine Christians resist and reimagine freedom within these oppressive systems? What can contemporary communities, especially those struggling for dignity, learn from this history as they grapple with ongoing inequities in church and society?

We welcome submissions that focus on, but are not limited to, one of the following themes:

- Theological justifications and critiques of slavery and settler colonialism.
- Historical and contemporary intersections of race, religion, and nationalism in shaping American Christianity.
- Contributions of Black, Indigenous, Latine and other marginalized voices to constructing prophetic theologies of liberation.
- Modern-day implications of settler colonialism and slavery in Christian theology, ethics, and activism.
- The role of memoirs, sermons, and forms of public discourse practices in shaping narratives of freedom or exclusion.

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 Jazak Gallardo, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
agallardo@austinseminary.edu
- Elaine Nogueira-Godsey, Methodist Theological School in Ohio
enogueiragodsey@drew.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit

Call for Proposals

Decolonial Pedagogy and Praxis

- 90-Minute Session

In this session, the LRCS unit convenes rigorous and critical discussions on the theoretical and practical dimensions of decolonial pedagogy, a transformative framework designed to confront and dismantle the enduring legacies of coloniality embedded within education. Decolonial pedagogy challenges the deeply entrenched Eurocentric paradigms that dominate knowledge production, teaching, and learning, advocating for a reimagined educational praxis that prioritizes justice, inclusivity, and liberation.

Drawing from the rich and resilient histories of resistance within Latina/o communities, this session explores how decolonial practices can foster educational spaces that are not only liberating but also grounded in cultural competency and solidarity. These elements are essential for reimagining rigor beyond Eurocentric frameworks, embedding it within practices that embrace diversity, relational accountability, and the lived realities of learners. Ultimately, this session invites participants to critically examine how decolonial pedagogy can transform classrooms into sites of empowerment, resistance, and collective healing.

Panelists should address one or more of the following questions:

- How can decolonial pedagogy foster freedom in the classroom and beyond?
- In what ways can decolonial pedagogy challenge the legacies of colonial violence and oppression?

- How does the act of self-narration contribute to decolonial practices, particularly for Latina/o communities?
- How can decolonial theory and critical pedagogy be employed to redefine rigor in ways that prioritize inclusivity and relational accountability?
- How can we incorporate pedagogies that recognize cultural competency and lived experiences as valuable epistemological sources in the classroom?

We invite submissions that discuss one of the following topics:

- The use of decolonial pedagogy to address issues of race, gender, sexuality, poverty, ecology and religion.
- The role of the body, emotion, and spirituality in decolonial teaching and learning.
- Critiques of the university as an institution and the construction of Latina/o Studies as a discipline.
- Decolonial praxis within and outside the classroom.
- The decolonization of curriculum and the inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives.
- The deconstruction of traditional power dynamics in the classroom and the creation of a more democratic and inclusive learning environment.
- The use of decolonial pedagogy to empower marginalized communities and promote social justice.
- The challenges and possibilities of implementing decolonial pedagogies in a variety of educational settings.

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.

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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Law, Religion, and Culture Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

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:

- 1) [The presidential theme of “Freedom.” We’re interested in limits on freedom of speech and assembly on college campuses. In collaboration with the Feminist Theory and the Study of Religion group](#) we’re open to panel and paper proposals addressing police actions and surveillance on campus; legislative intervention in curricula and legislative oversight of syllabi and course design, as well as responses to such restrictions by students and professors; and the future of DEI, its current role in the political imaginary, and corporate and campus reimaginations of DEI in our immediate political moment.
- 2) Child abuse: As we will be meeting in Boston, we’re interested in paper and/or panel proposals addressing the child sex abuse crisis, papers and panels thinking comparatively about issues of religiously-facilitated patterns of abuse and/or broader issues of law, religion, and children.
- 3) Bureaucracy: We’re interested in papers and/or panels on how the law stalls, on the ways legal activism loses momentum and public attention/support, the rituals of bureaucracy and proceduralism.
- 4) Hinduism: We’re interested in papers and/or panels on Hindus and Hindu practices as subjects and focus of law in the Western hemisphere.

Statement of Purpose

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

- Dana Lloyd, Villanova University
danalloyd15@gmail.com
- Spencer Dew, Ohio State University
spencerdew@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Law, Religion, and Culture Unit

Call for Proposals

For the June on-line session we’re interested in receiving paper and panel proposals on global issues: for instance, comparative approaches to religious nationalism, the use of “religious freedom” for political and legal purposes, global reactions to Israel’s war on Palestine, the role and future of the ICC, or a panel on the mobilization of antisemitism, and new legislation defining it, as a means of policing academic speech regarding Palestine.

Statement of Purpose

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danalloyd15@gmail.com
- Spencer Dew, Ohio State University
spencerdew@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

The Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit invites papers, panels, or roundtable sessions focused on trans, queer, lesbian, and/or feminist scholarship. We seek proposals on the following themes:

- We are interested in work that addresses AAR's Presidential Theme, "Freedom," through the lenses of BDSM, kink, leather, and other minoritized sexual practices. What freedoms arise out of constraint? What pleasures are possible (if any) in situations of unfreedom? We seek contributions that look at the relationship between religion and sexual practices, thinking with scholars as wide-ranging as (but not limited to) Marcella Althaus-Reid, Leo Bersani, Kent Brintnall, Patrick Califia, Andrea Long Chu, Tim Dean, Amber Hollibaugh, Niklaus Largier, Kobena Mercer, Amber Jamilla Musser, Jennifer Nash, Maggie Nelson, Paul Preciado, Gayle Rubin, Hortense Spillers, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, Margot Weiss, Linda Williams, and beyond.
- We are also interested in proposals that address themes of carcerality, fugitivity, enclosure, debt, or other practices of (un)freedom through trans, queer, feminist, and/or lesbian methods and theoretical approaches.
- [For a potential co-sponsored panel with the Gay Men and Religion Unit and the Secularism and Secularity Unit](#), for a panel celebrating and thinking with Anthony Petro's *Provoking Religion: Sex, Art, and the Culture Wars* (Oxford University Press, 2025). This is a largely pre-arranged author-meets-respondents session, but we

are interested in including additional scholars interested in queer, gay, lesbian, feminist, and trans visual culture, and twentieth-century American religious histories who would like to participate. Please email Siobhan Kelly (siokelly@bu.edu) if you would like to be considered as a panelist.

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 heteronormativity. We are especially committed to scholars and scholarship that advance people of color, trans scholars, 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

- Siobhan Kelly, Harvard University
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- Wendy Mallette, University of Oklahoma
wendy.mallette@ou.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Liberation Theologies Unit

Call for Proposals

Liberating Freedoms

The Liberation Theologies Unit invites proposals that engage critically with this year's presidential theme, "Freedom," from the perspective of liberation theologies. As a tradition of critical theological reflection, liberation theology correlates freedom with

justice, often challenging liberal conceptions of liberty by stressing the material conditions that render freedom possible. Liberationists have stressed that hegemonic understandings of freedom are constructed on the oppression of marginalized communities and populations, through land appropriation, labor exploitation, ecological devastation, and genocide. Moreover, in the current “culture wars” raging in academic and political discourse, there is a weaponization of the language of freedom under the pretense of the preservation of an intellectual and political “freedom” that often ends up stifling struggles for liberation, enforcing consent, and policing radical political and theological positions. What might freedom look like when considered entangled with the struggle for justice? How have liberation theologians construed freedom? What does freedom look like in sites of rampant political repression? How does freedom-talk function in theological and religious discourse?

As a unit, we envision the following themes as examples of possible engagements with our call for papers:

- Freedom and the boundaries of the nation-state: how do notions of freedom relate to the established and assumed boundaries of nation-states?
- Liberation theology, freedom, and justice after Gaza
- How might different languages, epistemologies, and worldviews construe “freedom”?
- Liberation theologies and the decolonization of freedom
- Freedom, civil war, and state-sponsored violence
- Freedom as ‘freeing’: imagining futures free from borders, oppressions, hierarchies
- Freedom not as a right but as a responsibility
- Freedom in the margins and the margins of freedom
- Co-optation of the language and structure of freedom

Pre-arranged Panel: Liberation Theologies after Gaza

The ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by the Israeli war on Gaza challenges liberation theologians to reimagine and rewrite the fundamental meanings of freedom and liberation. Is it even possible to imagine a theology of liberation “after” the war and the existential threat it poses to Palestinians? If so, how will this theology dismantle

globalized Christian Zionism and racialized military violence against Palestinians, while revitalizing prophetic traditions found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam? What about the hermeneutical competency necessary to produce liberation theology after Gaza? This pre-arranged panel brings liberation theologians from Middle East, North America, Latin America, and Asia who contributed to *Theology after Gaza* (2025). If you have any questions about this panel, please contact K. Christine Pae (paec@denison.edu).

Decolonizing “Internationalism:” Impoverishing the Nations (Possibly June Session)
2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, the formation of the United Nations, and the beginning of global conflicts often framed as the “Cold War.” The Liberation Theologies Unit and the Religion and Peace Unit of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) invite proposals for a special panel that examines the complex relationships between international organizations, Western conceptions of global peace, and the rising intra- and extra-state conflicts over the past eight decades. We particularly welcome proposals that explore the role of religion in both fueling these conflicts and offering alternatives to violence and oppression.

We invite submissions for both the June online meeting and the November in-person meeting in Boston. To foster inclusivity, we may prioritize international scholars who are typically unable to attend the in-person meeting for the June session, while reserving space in November for our usual constituencies.

Proposals may address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Unjust peace and the role of international organizations.
- Pacification plans from above that failed.
- "The North is Cold because the South is Hot": Cold War lessons from Global South/East perspectives.
- International networks of repression in the Global South.
- Why do Western democracies support non-Western autocracies?
- Are we living through a new red scare?
- The Spirit of Bandung as an international network today.

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
- K. Christine Pae, Denison University
paec@denison.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Liberation Theologies Unit

Call for Proposals

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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Mahabharata and Classical Hinduism Seminar

Call for Proposals

In its fifth year, the *Mahābhārata* and Classical Hinduism Seminar invites proposals on a wide array of topics, which might also integrate the President's theme for the year, "Freedom". Welcome are discussions of class, caste, and slavery; God, gods, and goodness; gender, sex, and asceticism; as well as *Mahābhārata* and pedagogy. How does the *Mahābhārata* teach? How do we teach the *Mahābhārata*? We encourage proposals on a range of these and other interests, prioritizing those who did not present in the preceding year (2024).

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
arti.dhand@utoronto.ca
- Bruce M. Sullivan, Northern Arizona University
bruce.sullivan@nau.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

[Mahabharata and Classical Hinduism Seminar](#)

Call for Proposals

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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

Open Call: Our 2025 Call for Papers firstly reiterates an Open Call for paper, roundtable or panel proposals related to the research interests of this unit.

Our unit's interests and topics range widely—from important recurring themes in the study of the historical Martin Luther to his theology, from historical movements and contexts to crucial figures in ongoing and contemporary Lutheran histories. As such,

the unit engages current intersectional, theoretical, and ethical analysis. It welcomes engagement with recently released books or research projects, new theological critique and construction, aspirations of research horizons, global contexts, and emergent movements. 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 diversity in global context, race, gender, and sexuality.

2025 marks a number of significant commemorations in Lutheran history and theology, so the Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit welcomes proposals on the following themes:

1. EcoActivist Testaments: The Ecotheology of H. Paul Santmire and Its Legacy

We seek papers, panels, or roundtable proposals that constructively engage the ecotheological work and legacy of the Lutheran theologian H. Paul Santmire. 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of Santmire's pathbreaking *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Fortress Press, 1985). There, Santmire argued that, "It seems clear that Christian theologians have a public responsibility to respond to [the environmental crisis] in terms of both a critical appropriation of their own tradition and a constructive exploration of the possibility of new ways of valuing nature, along with new ways of affirming the values of human history." Honoring his own critical and constructive call, we seek proposals that constructively engage Santmire's writings—especially their impact and scope in theology, biblical studies, history, liturgy, and spirituality. How has Santmire's work helped in the emergence of ecotheology, interrogations of the concept of "nature," or ecological justice? How might Santmire's work help us in thinking alongside new global ecological problems and promises?

2. Lutherans and pathological theologies: self-criticism for the sake of freedom

Taking its point of departure from Hanna Reichel's theory of theology as affordances, this panel seeks to critically examine the ways in which theological frameworks and ecclesial practices can unintentionally perpetuate or even instigate trauma, thereby

undermining their capacity to foster freedom and flourishing. By considering Lutheran theology specifically, the panel will engage with the ambiguities inherent in religious thought and practice—ambiguities that can either support healing and liberation or exacerbate existing pathologies. Lutheran theology, with its core doctrines on sin, atonement, and justification, often serves as a source of profound spiritual insight and personal transformation. However, the same theological constructs may also inflict harm, particularly when applied rigidly or without sensitivity to individual and communal contexts. These ambiguities reflect the broader complexities of religion, where the interplay of doctrine, authority, and lived experience can yield vastly different outcomes depending on how they are navigated. By exploring how the affordances of Lutheran theology—its capacity to shape human understanding and action—might be recalibrated to mitigate their potential for harm. How can the Lutheran tradition address the darker side of its theological legacy? What specific elements within its discourse or practice could be leveraged to counteract the risk of fostering pathological theologies and provide chances for freedom? In addressing these concerns, presenters may bring perspectives from systematic theology, practical theology, the psychology of religion and other related disciplines.

3. The 2025 Presidential Theme: Freedom

AAR President Leela Prasad asks, “Who decides who or what is free; for how long? Where is freedom preserved, where is it lost? Do we agree with Kris Kristofferson’s line, made famous by Janis Joplin: “Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose?” Can there be freedom without justice? Does, or should, freedom equal material and emotional well-being? How does one reconcile competing senses of freedom? We can ponder how freedoms and un-freedoms are entwined: Am I free if my freedom has come from the silencing or persecution of others (who, too, seek the freedom to worship, to earn a wage, to live with dignity, to love whom they choose, to laugh, to grieve, and so on)? What makes me believe I am free when not all of us are free? How is the human claim to freedom entangled with other life-forms—are there consequences to this entanglement? Relatedly, is freedom the right of all species? If freedom is temporal, when does a subject *feel* free? What, in the end, is the lived meaning of freedom?” The MLGLT Unit calls for proposals that seek to address these questions and more through the lens of Luther studies or Global Lutheran Traditions. How might Luther’s understanding of Christian Freedom as “freedom from” and “freedom for” be problematized or reimagined for theology, ethics, and politics? How have global histories of Lutheran freedom been complicit in violence or intersectional forms of oppression? How do Global Lutheranism speak variously about freedom, liberation,

justice? How does a Lutheran theology of freedom speak with or transform in interreligious, ecumenical, or ethical dialogue?

4. The Nicene Creed in Global Lutheran Theologies and Traditions

2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea. A number of church and academic bodies are marking the 325 CE event with gatherings, commemorations, conferences, and reflections. The MLGLT Unit seeks proposals that engage the council at Nicaea's place in Global Lutheran Traditions—particularly the reception, deployment, and transformation of the Nicene Creed in diverse global contexts. How has the Nicene Creed shaped Global Lutheranism? How has the deployment of the Creed contributed to connection or separation, identity and difference, ecumenical agreement and disagreement on orthodoxy and heresy, missiology, or settler colonialism? How has the Creed been received, transformed, reworked, translated, negotiated, or reimagined in Global Lutheran Traditions in Asian, Latin and South American, and African contexts? How do Lutherans engage controversies over the so-called 'Filioque' clause of the Creed and its ecumenical fallout? What impact has the diverse reception of the Nicene Creed had on Lutheran theological ethics and imaginations? Is credal Christianity helpful or harmful to belonging and connection?

5. The German Peasants' War: 500 Years Later (Potential Co-sponsorship with the Religion in Europe Unit)

500 years later, new historical and theological perspectives on the legacy of the German Peasants' War of 1524-25 are needed. Scholars have begun such important work on a range of subjects and figures (E.g., Andrew Drummond's recent *The Dreadful History and Judgement of God on Thomas Müntzer*, Verso 2024, and Lyndal Roper's important *Summer of Fire and Blood: The German Peasants' War*, Basic Books 2025). Alongside these, Martin Luther's own complicated legacy in the historical moment—often signified by his treatise "On the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants—is ever being evaluated anew. Luther's own legacy often signals a complicated Luther on forms of resistance, rebellion and reformation—a connection to violence, nonviolence, mysticism, class and social order. The MLGLT Unit, for a potential co-sponsorship with the Religion in Europe Unit, calls for paper proposals that re-engage, interrogate and reimagine the historical

and theological legacies of the Peasants' War, Luther's theological responses, and their contemporary legacies.

Again, the MLGLT Unit welcomes *any* proposals on Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions, alongside themes noted above.

Statement of Purpose

The Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit seeks to provide an avenue for a comprehensive conversation on both Lutheran history and thought in global contexts. In so doing, it is able to engage immensely rich traditions that go far beyond Lutheran parochial interests.

This Unit's interests and topics range widely—from important recurring themes in the study of the historical Martin Luther to his theology, from historical movements to the work of crucial contemporary figures. As such, the unit engages current intersectional, theoretical, and ethical analysis. Recent topics of importance have included ecology, histories of settler colonialism, gender and sexuality justice, and interfaith and interreligious theologies.

Chairs

- Jacob Erickson, Trinity College, Dublin
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- Marit Trelstad
trelstma@plu.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit

Call for Proposals

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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Men, Masculinities, and Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

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:

- [“Masculinity and Neo-Traditionalism”](#) – how are masculinities shaped by the pursuit and production of “tradition”?
 - (co-sponsorship with Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit)
- Death, dying, & masculinities: Destruction. Decay. Grief. Mourning. Death-drive. How can we think about the affects, spaces, and temporalities of masculinities in relation to endings and futures?
- Ingestibles and Consumption: PrEP and gender affirming hormones, anabolic steroids and testosterone supplements, performance enhancing honey packets and ED drugs, protein and creatine, nicotine pouches, gums that shape jawlines and improve “facial fitness,” male contraceptives in human trials and post-Roe vasectomy trends, condom use and pulling out, How do substances and practices of ingestion shape masculine embodiment and reveal its porosity and flexibility? This panel asks us to turn our attention to the stuff put into masc and male bodies, and what comes out of it.
 - (for possible co-sponsorship with the Religion and Food Unit)
- Masculinity and Religious Aesthetics (how do religious representatives signal and symbolize their masculinity through their clothing, manner, and behavior? How can we theorize these mediations of masculinities?)
- Masculinities and Project 2025–how does Project 2025 envision gendered futures?
- Masculinities and disability
- Non-Christian American masculinities
- Video games and virtual worlds

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

- Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada, Kalamazoo College
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- Sarah Imhoff, Indiana University, Bloomington
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Middle Eastern Christianity Unit

Call for Proposals

Ecology, Liturgy, and Practice: Environmental Themes in Middle Eastern Christianity.

The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit invites paper proposals exploring the intersections of ecology, liturgy, and religious practice in Middle Eastern Christian communities, both in their homelands and in the diaspora, across any historical period. Topics might include how ecological themes shape or are embedded within liturgical traditions, theological discourses, and everyday life; ecological readings of liturgical texts; the impact of environmental contexts on worship practices; or the role of Middle Eastern Christian communities in ecological advocacy. We especially encourage proposals engaging historical, theological, anthropological, literary, or interdisciplinary approaches to foster a broad and dynamic conversation.

[Minorities and Freedom in the Middle East: Biblical, Theological, and Socio-Political Perspectives \(co-sponsored session with Eastern Orthodox Studies. Unit and the SBL Unit on The Bible From Eastern Orthodox Perspectives\)](#)

The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit invites paper proposals for a co-sponsored session focusing on minorities and freedom in the Middle East from biblical, theological, socio-political or other disciplinary perspectives. We welcome focusing on Middle Eastern

Christians in their homelands or in the diaspora in any historical period and/or papers comparing Middle Eastern and other Eastern Christian experiences.

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

- Deanna Womack
deanna.f.womack@emory.edu
- Mourad Takawi, University of the Incarnate Word
mtakawi@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Middle Eastern Christianity Unit

Call for Proposals

Liturgy in the Life of Middle Eastern Christians

This panel invites papers on the centrality of liturgy in the lives of Middle Eastern Christians across denominations, both in their homelands, and in the diaspora. We welcome interdisciplinary approaches, including but not limited to theologies of liturgy, liturgical history, anthropology of ritual, and literary or philological studies of liturgical texts. Topics of interest include connections between liturgy and hagiography, shared saint veneration, the material and sensorial dimensions of worship, ecotheology, and the influence of the Hagiopolite liturgy on subsequent traditions.

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.

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- Mourad Takawi, University of the Incarnate Word
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Unit

Call for Proposals

This unit invites individual paper, paper session, and roundtable proposals that engage with the concepts of “moral injury” and recovery in light of AAR’s 2025 presidential theme of *freedom*. 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 2025 in-person meeting in Boston, we will explore the ways in which moral injury points to both our inter-connectedness as well as the ways in which our individual consciences condition our senses of responsibility, accountability and response. We will thus welcome paper proposals on moral injury in three broad clusters.

1. Migration and Refugees - As James Baldwin once wrote, “the wound is the wound upon the recognition that one is regarded as a worthless human being.” A race-based or nationality-based experience of wounding so characterized is deeply resonant with the concept of moral injury. Given the past and present failures of governments and institutions to act in moral ways, we invite papers that explore these aspects of moral injury in topics that may include:

- Experiences of racism and racial violence in the United States
- The normalization of racist political discourse in armed conflicts and politically volatile situations - particularly light of conflicts in Gaza, Syria and elsewhere
- The concept of ‘receptive,’ or ‘betrayal-type’ moral injury and structural systems and injustices
- The experience of moral violation or intersectional/intraethnic harms against marginalized groups
- Social engagement in anti-racism as a potentially morally injurious event for activists

2. How research into MI in non-military settings helps understand Military MI – The past decade has seen significant research on moral injury in diverse settings: healthcare, corrections and law enforcement, veterinary practice, etc... Much of this research has helped find both distinctive ways MI manifests in those settings as well as how it bears similarities to what military members and veterans experience. We therefore invite papers exploring aspects of this, including:

- Core aspects of MI revealed across its observation in different contexts
- Aspects of military MI that are perhaps revealed anew through expanding contextual research
- Ways in which religious language, theology and doctrine help to provide ‘connective tissue’ of conceptual frameworks

3. Healthcare – The killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson brings into focus many of the difficult moral tensions surrounding death and failings present in the American healthcare system. The situation also illuminates the increasingly unequal experience of care between those who can afford care and those who cannot, as well as deep moral questions about our societal structures and the nature of systemic violence and how acts of political violence arise. Moral injury may be seen as a helpful conceptual lens to analyse these issues. Thus, we invite papers that explore these topics, which might include:

- The moral tensions certain caregiver commonly experience in this system
- The ways in which narrative medicine, as a category, may offer a way to both name injustices and inadequacies as well as glimpse hope or freedom enacted within systems
- The difficult parsing of agency, responsibility, guilt, accountability, blame and justice therein

4. The Silencing of the Academy – In the current political era in the United States, educators find themselves under escalating political and legal pressures to conform to standards that violate their own moral consciences, and in many cases, that challenge their own commitments to empirical truth and historical consensus. Thus, we invite papers that explore the ways in which moral injury is experienced in these environments. Potential topics might include:

- Betrayal and the identity of educators in the system of increasingly mandated norms
- The silencing of teachers on topics of race, sexuality and justice
- Experiences of exclusion with the politicization of science, history and the “American experience”
- “What’s right” and the tensions between commitments to students, oneself, and broader society
- A growth in solidarity movements as being representatively constitutive of moral action or recourse

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
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- Nigel Hatton
nhatton@ucmerced.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Mormon Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 conference, we propose a few themes:

- Reality TV and Mormons
- Bodies and Mormon traditions
- Mormon traditions outside Utah

- Mormon traditions and Science Fiction
- The state of Mormon Studies

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.

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

- Jana Riess
riess.jana@gmail.com
- Benjamin Park, Sam Houston State University
bep013@SHSU.EDU

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Mormon Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 conference, we propose a few themes:

- Reality TV and Mormons
- Bodies and Mormon traditions
- Mormon traditions outside Utah
- Mormon traditions and Science Fiction
- The state of Mormon Studies

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.

Individual paper proposals welcome. We are especially interested in panel proposals for this meeting.

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

- Jana Riess
riess.jana@gmail.com
- Benjamin Park, Sam Houston State University
bep013@SHSU.EDU

Motherhood and Religions

Call for Proposals

The Variety of Maternal Experiences in Religious Contexts: Reading Religious Sources on Motherhood, Mothering, and Mothers across Time and Cultures

Maternal experiences—shaped by spiritual beliefs, religious traditions, and cultural practices—offer a unique lens through which to examine the intersection of motherhood and religion. From the institutional frameworks that define and regulate maternal roles to the deeply personal, lived experiences of mothering, religion exerts a multifaceted influence. This call for papers invites an interdisciplinary dialogue that explores the diversity and complexity of motherhood (as an institution) and mothering (as an experience) within religious contexts across time and place.

This inaugural call for papers for the new AAR Unit on Motherhood and Religions seeks to illuminate how maternal experiences are understood, constructed, and contested within and beyond religious frameworks, as well as how they can be critically studied by scholars in religious studies and closely related disciplines. It aims to engage with both normative and non-normative maternal roles, uncovering their significance in religious narratives, rituals, and communities. By exploring diverse contexts and perspectives, we hope to challenge reductive and hegemonic interpretations of motherhood and highlight its centrality as a category of analysis in religious studies.

We invite contributions that critically examine the ways religion shapes, supports, constrains, and challenges maternal roles. The following themes are intended as a guide, but submissions are not limited to these topics:

- Maternal Figures Across Time and Traditions Beyond traditional explorations of maternal archetypes in mythology, religion, and folklore, including divine, animal, and abstract representations, we want to ask, rather, how do these figures inform or challenge societal understandings of motherhood and the real, lived experiences of mothers, in history and today? What roles do these figures play in shaping theological and cultural ideals of motherhood?
- Maternal Rituals and Practices What are the rituals, prescriptions, or restrictions associated with motherhood in various religious traditions? How do they influence maternal agency and identity?
- Embodiment and Maternal Experience Critical discussions of biological and physiological dimensions of motherhood (e.g., fertility, pregnancy, birth,

lactation) and their cultural or spiritual interpretations. How are these experiences framed by religious or secular ideologies, and how do they shape maternal identities?

- **Maternal Agency and Resistance Analyses** of how maternal figures negotiate autonomy and resistance within restrictive frameworks, including religious, political, or societal systems. How do mothers reclaim or redefine maternal roles in diverse contexts? What strategies do mothers employ to navigate, resist, or transform these frameworks?
- **Non-Normative Maternal Roles and Non-Hegemonic maternal figures** Studies on maternal work performed by individuals or entities outside traditional definitions of motherhood—othermothering, communal parenting, spiritual mothering, queer mothering, single parenting, and technological or artificial maternities.
- **Intersectionality in Mothering and Maternal Work**, including beyond Gender Case studies that examine how intersecting identities (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability) shape and complicate maternal and traditional gender roles, including global perspectives from underrepresented regions. We welcome perspectives on maternal work undertaken by queer, male, nonbinary, and other caregivers.
- **Cultural and Religious Negotiations of Motherhood** Investigations of how motherhood and mothering practices are shaped, constrained, or reimagined by religious doctrines, cultural traditions, and state policies, including but especially beyond issues of rights over one's own body.
- **Maternal Narratives and Representation** The role of literature, art, and media in constructing or deconstructing narratives of motherhood. How are maternal voices included or excluded, and what do these representations reveal about broader cultural values?
- **Reclaiming Motherhood in Religious Contexts** How have mothers, as individuals or collectively, reclaimed or subverted religious narratives to advocate for maternal agency and justice?
- **Theoretical and Methodological Challenges in Religious Studies** What unique challenges arise when studying motherhood, mothering, and maternal identities at the intersection of religion and spirituality? How can new methodologies expand the field? '

This initiative builds upon and extends scholarship that situates motherhood as both an institution and a lived experience. Drawing from Adrienne Rich's distinction between motherhood and mothering, we seek to examine how religious frameworks shape, constrain, or enable these roles. Similarly, inspired by Sara Ruddick's understanding of mothering as an intentional practice ("mother" as a verb), this initiative emphasizes the

agency and creativity of those engaged in maternal work, irrespective of gender, biology, or traditional family structures.

By foregrounding the interplay between religion and maternal experiences, this new AAR Unit aspires to deepen our understanding of the importance of motherhood in shaping—and being shaped by—religious life. Through this initiative, we seek to create a robust platform for exploring the rich, complex, and varied dimensions of motherhood and religion.

Statement of Purpose

This unit focuses on the study of mothers, motherhood, mothering, and religions, providing a central nexus for scholars interested in matricentric feminist perspectives. We aim to address a significant gap in religious studies by emphasizing the diverse experiences and perspectives of mothers (of all genders), which have often been overlooked. Our unit draws on interdisciplinary approaches to explore motherhood and mothering in religious contexts, working with a comparative scope and welcoming work on all religious traditions, past and present. We seek to foster creative research, encourage the exchange of ideas, and provide a platform for critical conversations that challenge traditional narratives and assumptions on mothers, motherwork, women, and gender more generally. By centering maternal experiences and viewpoints, we aim to enrich the academic discourse with diverse, interdisciplinary perspectives and contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection between religion, mothers, motherhood, and mothering.

Chairs

- Florence Pasche Guignard, Other
florence.pasche@gmail.com
- Pascale Engelmajer
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Music and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

The Music and Religion section is perpetually interested in panels that combine performance and scholarly reflection, and/or book panel discussions that advance the field. Our 2025 Presidential Theme is "Freedom," so proposals related to this theme are especially welcome. These ideas can also be incorporated into any of the ideas below (as suggested by unit membership).

- Hymnody and the American Revolution
- Indigenous religious musics from around the World
- Musical representations of religion in children's media
- Anniversary-themed presentations surrounding musical works and music scene

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

- Alisha L. Jones, Indiana University, Bloomington
alj61@cam.ac.uk
- Joshua Busman
joshua.busman@uncp.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Music and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

The Music and Religion section welcomes proposals for virtual sessions to be held during the June Online meeting. We are perpetually interested in panels that combine performance and scholarly reflection, and/or book panel discussions that advance the field. We welcome submissions from students and scholars at all levels!

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

- Alisha L. Jones, Indiana University, Bloomington
alj61@cam.ac.uk
- Joshua Busman
joshua.busman@uncp.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Mysticism Unit

Call for Proposals

Mysticism and Liberation: Freedom, Confinement, and Exile

This panel invites papers on topics of mysticism and freedom that center liberatory practices and explicitly challenge authoritarian or oppressive structures. Of particular interest are diverse cultural practices, non-western, Indigenous, and de-colonial

approaches, and comparisons between Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric traditions in the liberation and/or confinement of human/religious freedoms.

- How (or does) mysticism “liberate”?
- Mysticism and exile
- Liberatory practices / mysticism and oppression / authoritarianism
- Confinement / Liberation
- Mysticism & authority: center and margins

Mysticism, Pedagogy, and Poetics

This panel invites papers that consider the relationship between mysticism, pedagogy, and the poetic. Proposals can consider methodologies and practices related to mystical pedagogy, theoretical approaches to the study of mysticism, and the role of affect.

Topics can include but are not limited to:

- Pedagogy and transmission
- Teaching and ineffability
- The poetics of mystical instruction
- Emic and etic approaches
- Embodiment and imagination

[Mysticism, Inter-Spirituality, and Multiple Religious Belonging](#)

[Co-sponsored with the Christian Spirituality Unit](#)

“Inter-spirituality” and “multiple religious belonging” are categories that scholars utilize to describe individuals and communities that lie beyond the borders and boundaries of traditional religious affiliation or identification. This panel invites papers that investigate the relationship between mysticism and inter-religious, inter-monastic, and/or “multiple” religious identification(s). Proposals can include recent trends and contemporary inter-spiritual mystics or movements, as well as past examples of persons, communities, or theorists who embody or exemplify multiple or religious cross-identification based upon their own mystical experience or *praxis*. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Mysticism and multiple religious belonging
- Mystical transgressions across religious borders and boundaries
- Apophatic and cataphatic approaches to inter-spirituality/multiple religious belonging
- “Universalist” and “perennialist” currents; Methodological concerns and lived *praxis*

- “New Monasticism” and inter-spirituality
- Synthesis vs. syncretism; inter-religious hybridity

[Transhuman Mysticisms: Animals, Aliens, and Objects](#)

[Co-sponsored with Arts, Religion, and Literature Unit](#)

This panel considers new approaches to the study of mysticism and the arts, with an emphasis on non-human, more-than-human, and transhuman “mysticisms,” particularly as expressed in visual art, music, film, and science fiction. Topics to be considered include:

- Multi-species mysticisms
- Mysticisms of unfolding: micro- and macrocosmic realities and hierarchies of emergence
- “Astro” mysticisms and “outer” spaces, particularly as represented in film, literature and the arts
- The “supernatural”: mysticism and ecology; mysticism and the natural world; “plant mysticisms”
- Mysticism and Science Fiction
- Mysticism and/as “outsider art”
- Mysticism and New Materialism

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
- David Odorisio, Pacifica Graduate Institute
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Native Traditions in the Americas Unit

Call for Proposals

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 "Freedom" we invite proposals for papers or panels that consider how Native people have worked to maintain cultural and religious freedom through various waves of colonial violence, and how Native cultures have defined and enacted freedom through tradition, ceremony, and sacred narratives both historically and in the present day. Some areas of focus might include:

- Examinations of legal decrees, such as the Doctrine of Discovery, Supreme Court rulings, and future potential executive actions that work to limit tribal sovereignty and religious freedoms for Native and Indigenous people of the Americas, and how people have challenged these legal doctrines in order to maintain their freedoms.
- Explorations of BIPOC conceptions of freedom, particularly religious freedom, past, present, and future, and how BIPOC communities and individuals have worked to maintain and gain freedoms within changing forms of subjugation, incarceration, and suppression.
- Examination of how Native communities conceptualize the land and more-than-human plant and animal beings as agents deserving of freedoms and rights, with

consideration to how Native religious traditions can or have influenced global and dominant discourses related to nature and the environment.

- Reflections on the local Native communities of New England, with the possible inclusion of ways to improve academic-tribal partnerships.

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

- Andrea McComb Sanchez, University of Arizona
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- Felicia Lopez, Other
flopez44@ucmerced.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

New Religious Movements Unit

Call for Proposals

The New Religious Movements Program Unit seeks proposals on topics related to new religions, religious freedom, and political issues broadly conceived. We also seek proposals addressing how new religions are being portrayed in a variety of contemporary media sources such as fictional and documentary TV shows, popular literature, and social media. Additionally, we will consider proposals on NRMS and new religious issues in the New England and the Boston areas, especially proposals focused on healing, spirituality, and religious experience.

[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

- Jeremy Rapport
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- W. Michael Ashcraft, Truman State University
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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Nineteenth Century Theology Unit

Call for Proposals

In 2025, we will have three sessions:

The History of Religions School

This panel seeks to explore the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (History of Religions School), a scholarly movement that emerged around 1884 in Göttingen and rose to prominence in the early 20th century and significantly shaped the academic study of religion. The movement included notable scholars like Wilhelm Bousset, Rudolf Otto, Hermann Gunkel, Johannes Weiss, and Wilhelm Herrmann, among others. They introduced comparative, historical, and phenomenological methods, encouraging scholars to study religions not in isolation but as evolving traditions influenced by social and cultural exchanges. Through its influence on centers of theological and religious scholarship, such as the University of Chicago, the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* left a lasting mark on the academic study of religion in North America, promoting a cross-cultural understanding that has become a foundational approach in the field. However, some of the school's underlying assumptions—such as its framing of religious traditions with stable boundaries and its often racialized views on ethnicity and religious identity—are more controversial and critically examined in religious studies.

This panel examines the social and cultural development of this movement as well as philosophical influences and theoretical foundations. Papers may address how its perspectives on religion, culture, and identity continue to shape in often unseen ways both descriptive and normative approaches in theology and religious studies today. Papers could also delve into the works of individual theologians, including E. Troeltsch, Adolf von Harnack, George Burman Foster, Shirley Jackson Case, and others, focusing on their connections to the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*.

The panel will feature invited panelists.

[A tri-sponsored session with the Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit and the Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit](#)

[Revisiting Personalism: In Boston and Beyond](#)

In 2025, the Annual Meeting returns to Boston, approximately 150 years after Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910) returned to the U.S. from his European studies at Paris, Halle, and Göttingen, where he was deeply influenced by Hermann Lotze. Bowne taught for many years in the School of Theology at Boston University, he founded the Graduate School and the Philosophy Department, and he became known as the “Father of Boston Personalism.”

The Nineteenth Century Theology Unit, the Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit, and the Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit jointly invite papers on the subject of (Boston) Personalism and especially addressing topics that arise in light of the Annual Meeting's theme of "Freedom." Papers may consider nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophical and theological movements that influenced the development of Personalism (as it arose in affirmation of or in contradiction to them) as well as persons, positions, and movements that were directly or indirectly influenced by Personalism, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the American Civil Rights Movement or attempts at West European Integration after World War II. We also invite papers that delve into original personalist thought and its relevance in contemporary discussions of personalism, connecting past and present by considering how early personalist thought continues to be relevant in our world today.

[A co-sponsored session with the Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Unit](#)

[Religion and Literature in the Nineteenth Century](#)

The objective of this session is to explore how religious ideas connect with the broader world of literature in the nineteenth century. Recent works in nineteenth-century literary studies increasingly acknowledge the critical role of religion, but the analyses of literary works from this era often sideline specifically theological reflections. This session seeks to illuminate the intrinsic relationship between religion and literature in the nineteenth century, encouraging paper proposals that investigate this relationship from a theological perspective. The works of nineteenth century authors grappled with themes such as the divine; the infinite versus the finite; ethical living; the problem of evil and other paradoxes inherent in Christian beliefs; the nature of faith; the role of imagination for spiritual understanding; and the nature of religious experience.

We invite papers that explore these and other themes in fresh ways and thereby contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between religion, theology, and literature. Papers might engage various literary, religious, and theological authors in the nineteenth century, such as L. Tieck, W. Blake, F. Dostoevsky, G. MacDonald, and others, including authors from the global South. Papers on S. Kierkegaard and literature are particularly welcome.

[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
aaubert@wts.edu
- Matthias Gockel
matthias.gockel@unibas.ch

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Nineteenth Century Theology Unit

Call for Proposals

Exploring the Council of Nicaea in the Nineteenth Century

2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. To commemorate this anniversary, the Nineteenth Century Theology Unit is organizing a session that explores the concept and doctrine of God, broadly understood, throughout the long nineteenth century. This anniversary provides an important occasion to reflect on the reception of the Nicene formula during an era characterized by the legacy of Enlightenment rationalism and Kant's rejection of speculative metaphysics, and the recovery and reinterpretation of trinitarian thought following the respective philosophical projects of Hegel and Schelling. Against this backdrop, the nineteenth century posed both new challenges and opportunities for the understanding and articulation of the doctrine of God. As we commemorate this pivotal moment in the history of Christian thought, this session welcomes papers that focus on the reception, critique, and transformation of the Nicene formula throughout nineteenth-century theology. Papers may explore how "Nicene theology" shaped and was reshaped by key theological figures and movements of the Nineteenth Century in different regions of the world. Topics may include specific concepts and doctrines, such as the Trinity and Christology, as well as historical developments, such as different forms of confessionalism.

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.

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In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

North American Hinduism Unit

Call for Proposals

While we accept paper proposals, we strongly encourage paper proposals to respond to our CFP to increase chance of acceptance. We welcome and encourage full panel (paper or roundtable) proposals with a coherent theme that respond to one of the topics listed in the CFP and/or proposals which speak to the unit's priorities and the AAR presidential theme. We believe strongly in collaboration and welcome the opportunity to host cosponsored sessions. If you have any additional questions and/or are interested in submitting to a particular session listed below please contact Rupa Pillai (rupillai@sas.upenn.edu) or Dheepa Sundaram (dheepa.sundaram@du.edu). Contact the Chairs advance of submitting proposals if you have any questions or need assistance.

Con-spirituality, Orientalism and Fascism, Yogis, Cottage Industry Gurus—

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?

Transforming the Teaching of Hinduism in North American Universities—

In Religious Studies departments across North America, Hinduism is taught in standalone courses or within survey courses such as World Religions. As instructors of such courses, we frequently question our academic freedom in how we teach Hinduism. While we may have innovative ideas to disrupt orientalist approaches that have dominated the field, the structure of academia and outside forces increasingly influence how we teach Hinduism (i.e. the increasing precarity of the professoriate, impact of state and federal policies of curriculum, etc). This panel seeks papers that share struggles and dream possibilities to transform the teaching of Hinduism in North American universities. Papers might explore the following questions: How have curricular requirements by the state influenced how you teach Hinduism? What other issues limit your freedom to teach Hinduism? And what pedagogical approaches can help our students to analyze power and inspire them to be engaged citizens?

Academic Freedom, Equity Practices, and the Study of Asian Religions in North America (roundtable session)

Inspired by the 2025 AAR Presidential Theme, this panel explores the state of academic freedom of scholars of Asian religions training and/or employed in North America. We are particularly interested in how nonprofit-designated organizations and practitioner-focused groups can impact, shape, and direct how Asian religions such as Hinduism are critically engaged in academic settings as well as scholarship and teaching within public-facing venues. Some questions that shape our thinking for this session: How does the proliferation of endowed positions impact the academic freedom of the scholars who hold them and the departments that house them? How do the composition of South Asian/Asian Studies and Religion departments impact and shape graduate admissions and thereby shape the field at large? What are the possibilities of pursuing public scholarship and how should scholars of Asian religions become public scholars?

[Sikh-Hindu Relations in the North America: Contexts and Conflicts](#)

[Co-Sponsor: Sikh Studies Unit](#)

Migration and labor histories, racialization and anticolonial movements, legacies of Partition and 1984, diasporic clashes and interreligious violence—Sikh-Hindu relations in North America are shaped by many contexts and conflicts. The North American Hinduism Unit and the Sikh Studies Unit invite papers that draw on archival, literary, ethnographic, and/or interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Sikh-Hindu relations in North America. Topics might include: 1) histories of migrant labor, racialization, immigration, and citizenship, 2) anticolonial movements, the Ghadar Party, Hindu-Sikh presence in California, 3) Sikh-Hindu religious practices, 4) impact of Partition (1947) and the 1984 Anti-Sikh violence on diasporic relations, 5) political formations and questions of sovereignty in the diaspora, 6) Sikh-Hindu inter-religious conflicts in North America.

[Political Extremism and Rise of Asian American Religious Conservatism](#)

[Co-Sponsor: Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit](#)

As we prepare for another Trump administration, the impact on minoritized and marginalized communities will be significant. While such impacts, particularly in terms of migration, labor, and race have been discussed at length, the internal divisions within non-majoritarian communities in the US and in North America writ large is often lost. This session examines the rise of Asian American conservatism, broadly construed. We seek to understand the various communities that identify as “Asian” and “conservative” within a landscape of conservative politics which embraces anti-immigrant sentiment and policies, finds common cause with anti-equity policies in education, and seeks to promote majoritarian (read: white) victimhood politics. Many of these policies are palatable within Asian American communities that view themselves as different or exceptional in relation to other immigrant communities. For example, in response to the Heritage foundation’s Project 2025 manifesto, the Hindu American Foundation, a Hindu nationalist organization in the US, released its own document titled Hindu American Project 2025, seeking Trump’s endorsement. We welcome papers which address the rise in Asian American conservatism, their racialized and minoritized positionalities within a political climate that is increasingly anti-immigrant, how they view affirmative action and other programs from which many Asian

Americans benefit, and the intersection of conservative politics in the US and religious nationalisms within Asian American communities.

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 and related South Asian traditions and cultures 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 5-7 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

- Dheepa Sundaram, University of Denver
dheepa.sundaram@du.edu
- Rupa Pillai
rupillai@sas.upenn.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

North American Hinduism Unit

Call for Proposals

Emerging Scholars in the Study of Hinduism and Migration in the Americas (panel session)

The North American Hinduism unit invites emerging scholars in the study of Hinduism and migration in the Americas. The primary goal of this panel is to showcase the work of graduate students and junior scholars studying the intersection of Hinduism and migration, with a focus on the Americas. Our unit is especially interested in showcasing emerging scholars who are contemplating the value of diasporic frames, utilizing novel methodologies (i.e. ethnographic, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, social media analysis) and/or studying topics related to caste, race, gender, sexuality, or climate/environment. We aim to learn from these new scholars in terms of the content of their research and 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.

Statement of Purpose

Overview:

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dheepa.sundaram@du.edu
- Rupa Pillai
rupillai@sas.upenn.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

North American Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

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 and concepts that have shaped the field of American religion. We welcome proposals for roundtables, debates, workshops, performances, pre-circulated papers, and other creative formats that foster rich discussion connecting new research to ongoing discussions in religious studies and the wider academy. Although we do not sponsor author-meets-critics sessions focused on a single book, we welcome proposals that offer reflection on two or more works of scholarship on American religion.

We encourage the submission of both individual contributions and complete paper panels and roundtables, though we may reconfigure proposed panels to place them on the conference program. We strongly encourage those who submit proposals for paper panels and roundtables to include participants who are diverse in gender, race and ethnicity, and professional status. We are especially eager to support and receive proposals from junior scholars, especially graduate students and contingent scholars.

For our 2025 meetings in June and November, we welcome proposals on the following topics:

- Reflection on significant historical events marking milestone anniversaries, such as the 1925 Scopes Trial, the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, the 1965 killing of Malcolm X, and the 2000 Y2K scare
- Martyrs and martyrdom
- Exodus and emigration
- Normativity and the study of religion
- Health and healthcare access, including reproductive healthcare
- Campus politics, activism, and practices of engaged scholarship
- Any other theme in the field of American religion

Please ensure that all submissions are anonymous.

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

- Brett Esaki, University of Arizona
issesaki@gmail.com
- Melissa Borja, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
mborja@umich.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

North American Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

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- Melissa Borja, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
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[Open and Relational Theologies Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

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 2025 Meeting, the Open & Relational Theologies Unit invites proposals on the following themes:

Eschatology and Hope in Open and Relational Theology

Open and Relational Theology deems God to be persuasive not coercive, a lure not a puppeteer. But if God's love precludes God's control of individual persons and our collective history, then how hopeful can we be? Such freedom would seem to imply our ability to resist God's love forever, resulting in everlasting self-exile from salvation. It would also seem to imply the ability of evil to triumph in time, if God is unwilling to coercively hand goodness a victory. Yet, interpretations of God as all-controlling seem to deny human freedom and responsibility. This panel will explore the relationships between eschatological hope, divine love, human freedom, and the destiny of time. The unit invites proposals from a wide variety of theological perspectives.

The Legacy of Jürgen Moltmann

Jürgen Moltmann's passing in 2024 called forth a wave of remembrance and appreciation, highlighting once again his place in the firmament of contemporary theology. The Open & Relational Theology Unit invites submissions for papers exploring the ongoing influence of Moltmann's life and thought, especially in application to open and relational spaces. Our areas of interest include but are not limited to:

- Social trinitarianism(s)
- Eco-theology/theologies of creation
- Providence and/or the temporality of the divine
- Interreligious dialogue and theological collaboration
- Christology and/or the passibility of God
- Universalism and the nature of religious hope
- The concept of freedom in theology and society
- The world as home

Statement of Purpose

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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
- Jon Paul Sydnor
jonpaulsydnor@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

[Open and Relational Theologies Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

Open and Relational Theology outside North America

Open and Relational Theology is a worldwide movement, but many of its researchers are unable to attend the November meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Recognizing this impoverishment, for the online June meeting of the AAR the Open and Relational Theology Unit is issuing a call for papers from relational theologians outside North America. Together, we will explore global developments in this promising worldview. The unit is open to papers on all ORT themes, from any faith tradition, and is hoping for a truly international panel.

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.

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Chairs

- Janna Gonwa, Gannon University
jannakelly1@gmail.com
- Jon Paul Sydnor
jonpaulsydnor@gmail.com

Pentecostal–Charismatic Movements Unit

Call for Proposals

The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Unit of the American Academy of Religion seeks papers and panels for the 2025 meeting in Boston on the following topics:

- book panels on significant books which expand or challenge the current narratives of Pentecostal/Charismatic history
- the Globalization of Pentecostalism, particularly in South America and/or Africa. and/or Asia
- Pentecostals/Charismatics and Ecumenical movements
- Pentecostals and the prophetic
- Pentecostals and their interactions with other religious conservatives such as Mormons

For panels, the unit requests diverse representation in presenters, research subjects, topics, and methodologies.

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

- Creighton Coleman, University of Virginia
cdc9vu@virginia.edu
- Erica Ramirez, Auburn Seminary
erica.ramirez@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Pentecostal–Charismatic Movements Unit

Call for Proposals

Priority will be given to panels that are discussion based and involve audience participation. The steering committee is open to a number of topics.

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

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cdc9vu@virginia.edu
- Erica Ramirez, Auburn Seminary
erica.ramirez@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Philosophy of Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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:

- In dialogue with the presidential theme for the 2025 meeting, we invite papers on the concept of freedom. We are particularly interested in philosophical analyses of the contradictions and possibilities of freedom, and how to grapple with its multiple meanings.
 - [Closely related to this, we invite papers on freedom as fugitive and marronage, for a possible co-sponsor with the Political Theology Unit.](#)
- Solidarity, whether across differences, in response to injustice, or in service of new forms of community and empowerment
- Knowledge, action, and hope: what can we know that will motivate us to act in such a way that we're hopeful? We invite papers that explore the intersection between epistemology and hopeful agency, as well as papers that examine philosophy as a way of life.
- Early modern philosophy of religion: We invite papers that explore new topics in this important period, including those focusing on conceptions of the relation between philosophy of religion and the natural sciences
- Methodology in philosophy of religion: What makes philosophy of religion, especially in its more thematic and interdisciplinary forms, philosophy?
- Trans theory and philosophy of religion
- In light of his passing in 2023, we invite papers on the significance of Enrique Dussel's thought for philosophy of religion.
- Intelligence, agency, and communication of nonhuman species, in light of ecological sensibilities and ethics

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

- Lori K. Pearson, Carleton College
lpearson@carleton.edu
- Stephen Bush, Brown University
stephen_bush@brown.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit

Call for Proposals

The Vision of God and the Divine Intellect

The vision of God is one of the key topics of Western philosophy and is frequently linked to a model of intellect derived from the Platonic tradition. This panel invites papers that explore how images of 'vision' relate to strictly epistemological and metaphysical concerns? These are issues that have captivated philosophers from Plato, to Nicholas of Cusa, to Spinoza, to Hegel and beyond. The notion of divine vision has generated numerous difficulties, as evinced by the critiques of many recent philosophers writing in the wake of both Heidegger and the twentieth century empiricists, both of whom have often been unsparing in their critiques of such metaphysical models. Analysis of some recent reflection on this topic from philosophers such as Jean-Luc Marion or Stephen Clark would be welcome. Papers are invited from both a historical and systematic perspective.

The Great Chain of Being

The Great Chain of Being is perhaps the most distinctive aspect of what C.S. Lewis described as 'The Discarded Image'. Is the modern age best considered as the rejection of the scala naturae that shaped the Western mind from Parmenides to Dionysius the Areopagite, Dante, and Shakespeare? Since Descartes, many philosophers have tended to view human minds as 'ghosts in the machine' and as radically dislocated from

'nature'. Others have subsumed the human person into 'nature' challenging the aspects of human nature that resist reduction to the 'physicalist' paradigm, such as 'consciousness' 'intentionality' or a 'sense of value'. Some have viewed this dichotomy between Cartesianism and materialism as one reason for the ecological crisis. Are there good reasons for viewing the human being as a 'part' of nature, and yet occupying a unique role and responsibility in the 'chain of being'? What are the prospects for the idea of the 'chain of being' without theology? Papers are invited from both a historical and systematic perspective.

[Participatory Thought in the Platonic and Augustinian Tradition](#)

[This call is for a possible co-sponsored session supported by the AAR Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit & Augustine and Augustinianisms Unit](#)

The past several years have witnessed renewed interest in participatory metaphysics, a key conceptual element of the Platonic tradition. Participation has been employed in different ways to conceptualize the relationship between God and creation, transcendence and immanence, and the One in the many. In this context Augustine, and numerous figures influenced by his thought, have made important and innovative contributions to this tradition. As such, it represents a theological and philosophical conversation that has continued across centuries. This panel invites papers that consider participatory metaphysics that examine either Augustine and Augustine-influenced thinkers, as well as papers that consider participation in the wider Platonic tradition.

Deification

This is a co-sponsored session with the AAR Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit & SBL Religion and Philosophy in Antiquity Unit

This book review panel focuses on the biblical and philosophical roots of the doctrine of deification by discussing Part One of 'The Oxford Handbook of Deification', edited by Paul Gavriluk, Andrew Hofer, and Matthew Levering. In what sense is the concept of deification 'biblical'? How did Platonism and its later Christian and non-Christian expressions influence the development of this doctrine? What does the history of

patristic and medieval biblical exegesis have to teach us about the significance of the doctrine of deification? What are the most significant shifts in the contemporary reception and appropriation of deification? A panel of three experts, to be chosen through the Call for Papers, will discuss these and related topics in conversation with two volume co-editors, Paul Gavriyuk and Matthew Levering.

[Platonism in the Religious Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity](#)

[This is a co-sponsored session with the AAR Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit & AAR Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit](#)

We are interested in proposals related to the reception of Plato and the Platonic tradition in the context of the religious traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity, including Jewish, Christian, and early Islamic voices in that time and place as well as proposals that take comparative approaches to these traditions and 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 J.B. Hampton, University of Toronto
hampton.alex@gmail.com
- Douglas Hedley, University of Cambridge
rdh26@cam.ac.uk

[Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

The unit invites submissions for papers relating to the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions generally, in both historical and constructive contexts. Papers on the topics of participation, deification, and nature are particularly encouraged.

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 J.B. Hampton, University of Toronto
hampton.alex@gmail.com
- Douglas Hedley, University of Cambridge
rdh26@cam.ac.uk

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Political Theology Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

The Political Theology Unit invites submissions in the following four areas:

1) In dialogue with the presidential theme for the 2025 meeting, we invite papers that examine the liberal conception of freedom and its uses across the political spectrum today. Liberals and leftists have often ceded the language of liberty to the political right. Why is this the case and ought it to be the case? What sources might prompt reconsiderations of liberty?

[2\) We invite papers on freedom as fugitivity and marronage for a possible co-sponsorship with the Philosophy of Religion Unit.](#)

3) We are interested in papers that explore the place of anarchism within the tradition of political theology. We are particularly interested in conversations that engage Mikhail Bakunin's anarchist/atheist political theology, but also invite papers that explore other figures and political traditions that may be historically constitutive of the existing field of political theology but under-recognized (including and beyond anarchism).

[4\) We invite papers on secularisms and atheisms in conversation with queer and trans studies in religion, particularly through the lens of freedom, for a possible co-sponsorship with Queer Studies in Religion Unit.](#)

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

- Yountae An
anyount@gmail.com
- Michelle Sanchez
msanchez@hds.harvard.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Practical Theology Unit

Call for Proposals

The Practical Theology unit invites presentation proposals for the following three sessions. Please submit a proposal to the appropriate session call below.

[1\) Honoring the Life and Work of Emmanuel Y. Lartey: Co-Sponsored Session with Psychology, Culture, and Religion unit](#)

We are excited to announce a special session celebrating the transformative contributions of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Y. Lartey to pastoral theology, care, counseling, and practical theology. As the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Pastoral Theology and Spiritual Care at Emory University, Dr. Lartey has profoundly shaped global conversations on intercultural and postcolonial approaches to pastoral care, leaving an indelible mark on practical theology worldwide.

Dr. Lartey is widely recognized as a pioneer of postcolonial pastoral care, modeling respectful engagement across boundaries of race, gender, class, culture, and religion. His groundbreaking work, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, has influenced the ideas of countless practitioners and scholars globally.

This session aims to honor Dr. Lartey's legacy through a creative and interactive format, reflecting his commitment to dynamic engagement and intercultural dialogue. We invite proposals that celebrate his work in innovative ways, including:

- Interactive workshops or group activities inspired by his approaches.
- Creative presentations or performances highlighting his global impact.
- Collaborative dialogues exploring the future of pastoral theology in light of his contributions.

Co-sponsored by the Practical Theology Unit and Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit, this session will not only be a tribute but also a space for participants to actively engage with the themes that have defined Dr. Lartey's scholarship and ministry. Let's come together to celebrate, reflect, and imagine the future of intercultural pastoral and spiritual care.

2) Transformative Teaching and Learning in Practical Theology: Creative Approaches, Global Conversations, and Contextual Practices

The Practical Theology Unit invites paper proposals for its upcoming session on *Transformative Teaching and Learning in Practical Theology*. This session seeks to foster a global dialogue exploring innovative pedagogical approaches, contextual applications, and interdisciplinary insights within the sub-fields of practical theology.

The session invites contributions addressing (but not limited to):

- Innovative and experimental teaching methods in practical theology.
- Pedagogical creativity across diverse cultural and socio-political contexts.
- Theoretical reflections on learning processes in practical theology.
- Case studies of creative approaches within specific sub-disciplines (e.g., homiletics, pastoral care, liturgical studies, religious education).
- Collaborative and participatory models of teaching and learning.

We especially encourage *creative presentations* that go beyond conventional formats to embody and showcase the theme of the session itself.

We look forward to receiving proposals that engage global perspectives and inspire transformative approaches to teaching and learning within practical theology.

3) Practical Theology in Politically Fraught Times

The landscape of politics in the U.S. and around the globe is fraught with anxiety, distress, and suffering. We are witnessing unprecedented political tensions, deepening ideological polarization, rising authoritarianism (including Christian Nationalism), and erosion of democratic institutional norms. Competing narratives of truth, a proliferation of misinformation and disinformation, the marginalization of vulnerable communities, and geopolitical tensions further contribute to this anxiety. How might practical theology be done in these politically fraught times? How can practical theologians and practitioners respond meaningfully, critically, and compassionately to these global political challenges? What are the implications of these theologies and practices for conceptions and experiences of freedom (the 2025 AAR Theme)?

The Practical Theology Unit regards practical theology – a discipline committed to bridging theological reflection and lived reality – uniquely positioned to offer critical insights and transformative practices to these important questions. Our committee is particularly interested in presentations ranging across various sub-disciplines of practical theology, (including homiletics, congregational studies, pastoral care, spirituality, etc.), as well as presentations discussing ongoing and completed research projects that bring insight to the interdisciplinary nexus of political and practical theology. We welcome papers from diverse theological traditions, methodological approaches, and global perspectives that explore epistemological, methodological, and theoretical implications for the study of practical theology in these politically fraught times. We also invite papers that engage with the substantial implications for religious and political community engagement and meaningful social transformation.

Some guiding questions:

Epistemological and methodological

- How do our theological frameworks help or hinder our understanding of politics and political narratives?
- Which theological concepts can be used or developed to understand lived religious experiences in situations of political struggle?
- What research methods can we develop or employ to study the lived religious experiences of victims of political injustices, violence, and trauma?

Pastoral and ecclesiological

- What role can pastoral care play in dealing with violence and political trauma?
- How can our religious communities become spaces of dialogue and mutual understanding?

Transformational

- How can practical theology contribute to prophetic critiques of unjust political systems?

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 Lavalley
mlavalley@portsmouthabbey.org
- Sabrina Müller, Zurich University
sabrina.mueller@theol.uzh.ch

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit

Call for Proposals

Classical Pragmatist Roots and Contemporary Fruits

The Boston area is the birthplace of American Pragmatism. Charles Peirce was born in Cambridge, and William James spent much of his career teaching at Harvard. Both were shaped by the insights of the proto-pragmatism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Furthermore, Alain Locke and W.E.B Du Bois were both students of James who went on to make important pragmatism-inflected contributions to American and African-American thought and specifically influenced the Harlem Renaissance. The classical Pragmatists developed robust theories of psychology (especially James' theories of affect and emotion) and experience (especially Peirce's insights into truth, goodness, and beauty through empirical inquiry).

We invite papers that consider how the insights of the classical pragmatists can help us think through and address contemporary issues, including:

- Navigating our current information ecosystem and resisting misinformation
- Considerations of epistemic responsibility
- Theories of affect and emotion, especially as it relates to knowledge, motivation and breaking down the thinking/feeling binary.
- Questions of normativity in thought and action
- Approaches to learning through experience and experimentation
- Feminist and Womanist thought, especially ethics and epistemology

[Revisiting Personalism: In Boston and Beyond](#)

[Co-sponsorship with Nineteenth Century Theology Unit, Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit, and Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit](#)

- In 2025, the Annual Meeting returns to Boston, approximately 150 years after Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910) returned to the U.S. from his European studies at Paris, Halle, and Göttingen, where he was deeply influenced by Hermann Lotze. Bowne taught for many years in the School of Theology at Boston University, he founded the Graduate School and the Philosophy Department, and he became known as the “Father of Boston Personalism.”

- The Nineteenth Century Theology Unit, the Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit, and the Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit jointly invite papers on the subject of (Boston) Personalism and especially addressing topics that arise in light of the Annual Meeting’s theme of “Freedom.” Papers may consider nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophical and theological movements that influenced the development of Personalism (as it arose in affirmation of or in contradiction to them) as well as persons, positions, and movements that were directly or indirectly influenced by Personalism, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the American Civil Rights Movement or attempts at West European Integration after World War II. We also invite papers that delve into original personalist thought and its relevance in contemporary discussions of personalism, connecting past and present by considering how early personalist thought continues to be relevant in our world today.

Roundtable

Select Book Review of current scholarship; revisit discussion with West and Stout; or roundtable on contemporary thought and Empiricism and Pragmatism

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

- Mary Friedline, Austin College
maryleah.friedline@gmail.com

- Xavier Pickett, North Carolina State University
Xavier.pickett@ptsem.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Pre-Conference Workshops

Chairs

- Amy Defibaugh
adeibaugh@aarweb.org
- Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida
ann.gleig@ucf.edu
- Claudia Schippert
claudiaschippert@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Pre-Conference Workshops

Chairs

- Amy Defibaugh
adeibaugh@aarweb.org
- Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida
ann.gleig@ucf.edu
- Claudia Schippert
claudiaschippert@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

[Honoring the Life and Work of Emmanuel Y. Lartey \(Potential Co-Sponsor with Practical Theology Unit\)](#)

We are excited to announce a special session celebrating the transformative contributions of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Y. Lartey to pastoral theology, care, counseling, and practical theology. Emmanuel Lartey has profoundly shaped global conversations on intercultural and postcolonial approaches to pastoral care, leaving an indelible mark on practical theology worldwide.

Lartey is widely recognized as a pioneer of postcolonial pastoral care, modeling respectful engagement across boundaries of race, gender, class, culture, and religion. His groundbreaking work, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, has influenced the ideas of countless practitioners and scholars globally.

This session aims to honor Lartey's legacy through a creative and interactive format, reflecting his commitment to dynamic engagement and intercultural dialogue. We invite proposals that celebrate his work in innovative ways, including

- Interactive workshops or group activities inspired by his approaches
- Creative presentations or performances highlighting his global impact
- Collaborative dialogues exploring the future of pastoral theology in light of his contributions.

Co-sponsored by the Practical Theology Unit and Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit, this session will not only be a tribute but also a space for participants to actively engage with the themes that have defined Lartey's scholarship and ministry. Let us come together to celebrate, reflect, and imagine the future of intercultural pastoral and spiritual care.

[Psychology of Religion on Reproductive Health](#)

The PCR Unit invites submissions for papers that explore psychological dimensions of reproductive health, with particular attention to pregnancy, childbirth, infertility, and surrogacy. We focus on exploring the role of religion and spirituality in shaping human experiences, attitudes, and decision-making processes regarding reproductive health. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- How religious and spiritual beliefs influence understanding of reproductive health.

- The role of spirituality in coping strategies and psychological adaptation during reproductive health challenges, such as infertility, high-risk pregnancy, or surrogacy.
- How religion and spirituality intersect with reproductive health policies and practices, and their impact on decision-making and agency.
- The potential of psychological and religious perspectives to inform and improve reproductive health interventions, support systems, and policies across diverse cultural contexts.

The Psychological Investigation of Howard Thurman’s Spirituality

In honor of the enduring legacy of Howard Thurman (1899–1981), former Dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University School of Theology, the PCR Unit invites submissions for papers that explore the psychological dimensions of Thurman’s spirituality. Thurman, a theologian, philosopher, minister, chaplain, and mystic, was deeply concerned with people’s inner lives, their encounters with the divine, spiritual disciplines, and the care of those in need. His work continues to inspire scholars, practitioners, and communities engaged in the work of education, spiritual care, justice, and healing. We seek papers that engage with Thurman’s ideas from the perspective of psychology, culture, and religion. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- How can Thurman’s emphasis on “inner experience” be explored more deeply from a psychological standpoint?
- In what ways do the insights of the psychology of religion expand Thurman’s understanding of an encounter with the divine as a “mystical experience”?
- How does Thurman’s focus on “the disinherited” contribute to our understanding of the psychological impact of systemic oppression?
- How does Thurman’s spirituality—emphasizing forgiveness, peace, and compassion—shape and influence the practice of spiritual care, chaplaincy, and community organizing today?

23 Years After *Spotlight*: Trust, Justice, and Healing for the Life of the Catholic Church

On January 6, 2002, *The Boston Globe* published a groundbreaking investigation revealing that former priest John Geoghan had abused 130 children, with the Catholic hierarchy covering up the crimes. This revelation sparked a global reckoning within the Catholic Church, marking a very dark chapter, particularly for the Catholic community in Boston, and the pain continues to resonate today. In the years since, efforts to rebuild

trust, pursue justice, and promote healing within Catholic communities have been central to academic, religious, and social discourse. As we reflect on the ongoing consequences of the clergy sexual abuse crisis, we invite papers that address the psychological, spiritual, and communal wounds caused by the crisis. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Rebuilding Trust and Justice: How have scholars, educators, and practitioners contributed to rebuilding trust and promoting justice within Catholic church communities in the aftermath of the crisis?
- Psychological and Spiritual Healing: How can psychology, theology, and culture engage in generative conversations to address the psychological and spiritual needs of parishioners and church leaders in the aftermath of the crisis?
- New Initiatives and Ministerial Programs: What new initiatives, ministerial programs, and spiritual practices have emerged to prevent future abuse, promote healing, and foster flourishing within the Catholic Church? How can the church create more just and transparent systems of accountability and care for its members?

The PCR also encourages and welcomes proposals and roundtables on topics beyond those listed in the Call for Papers above. If you have any questions, please reach out to the co-chairs.

Statement of Purpose

The PCR (Psychology, Culture, and Religion) unit is comprised of scholars and practitioners in the fields of psychology, religious and theological studies, and cultural analysis. The interests of our members range from Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis to the practice of pastoral care and 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: psychculturereligion@aarlists.org

- You can also join the PCR Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/558617967619873/>
- Any questions? please reach out to the co-chairs.

Chairs

- Danielle Tumminio Hansen, Emory University
danielle.tumminio@aya.yale.edu
- Eunil David Cho, Boston University
eunilcho@bu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Publicly Engaged Scholarship in the Study of Religion Seminar

Call for Proposals

In keeping with the Presidential theme of “Freedom,” the Publicly Engaged Scholarship in the Study of Religion Seminar invites papers and/or panels that explore:

- Roundtable discussions on recently published books (2-3) that focus on engaged methodologies and processes in research. Proposals may include a specific book or books for consideration. In the proposal authors may wish to include a list of possible respondents who can wrestle with the themes/findings of the books. We encourage early career scholars, manuscripts and edited volumes, and content across times, geographies, and disciplinary focus.
- A discussion on academic freedom and civil disobedience in the context of engaged pedagogy and research. This might include the politics and ethics of engaged methodologies, scholarship as a form of activism, and/or the logistics and challenges of coordinating teaching and research activities with communities engaged in extra-legal activities. Papers may present distinct case studies but should also discuss the ethical conundrums surrounding how scholars manage the distinction between our roles as educators, activists, and as citizens or change-makers.

Statement of Purpose

This seminar creates a multi-disciplinary space to explore the intersections between publicly engaged research, collective knowledge production, and relations of power in the study of religion. As part of broader conversations about the relationships between social change and the public humanities, the seminar is organized around diverse ideas of “the public” and interrogates the forces of racialized and colonial power that shape our fields. Whereas disciplinary training often privileges postures of political neutrality, we orient conversations around what it means to do scholarship that has political stakes, who we do that work with, and how we can strengthen that work. The seminar aims to generate a space for those with broad interests in the theoretical, methodological, and historical foundations of knowledge production in the study of religion and its political and public impacts. The seminar provides a nexus for collective consideration of processes of social change and social justice as they relate to theories of religion. The space will also interest those with practical interests in how to establish and sustain community and/or politically-engaged research and teaching programs within and beyond the academy.

Chairs

- Lucas Johnston
johnstlf@wfu.edu
- Rebecca Bartel
rbartel@sdsu.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Publicly Engaged Scholarship in the Study of Religion Seminar

Call for Proposals

We welcome proposals that include community members and other stakeholders as co-presenters and co-researchers. We are interested in dialogue about and around research processes with community partners and their perspectives as non-academics

and individuals or communities who advocate and engage in direct action, political advocacy, and/or other social intervention that academics may study and/or support.

Other paper and panel proposals which fit with the mission of the seminar and which address the conference theme of Freedom will also be considered.

Statement of Purpose

This seminar creates a multi-disciplinary space to explore the intersections between publicly engaged research, collective knowledge production, and relations of power in the study of religion. As part of broader conversations about the relationships between social change and the public humanities, the seminar is organized around diverse ideas of “the public” and interrogates the forces of racialized and colonial power that shape our fields. Whereas disciplinary training often privileges postures of political neutrality, we orient conversations around what it means to do scholarship that has political stakes, who we do that work with, and how we can strengthen that work. The seminar aims to generate a space for those with broad interests in the theoretical, methodological, and historical foundations of knowledge production in the study of religion and its political and public impacts. The seminar provides a nexus for collective consideration of processes of social change and social justice as they relate to theories of religion. The space will also interest those with practical interests in how to establish and sustain community and/or politically-engaged research and teaching programs within and beyond the academy.

Chairs

- Lucas Johnston
johnstlf@wfu.edu
- Rebecca Bartel
rbartel@sdsu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Quaker Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The Quaker Studies Unit always welcomes individual papers related to Quakerism, broadly conceived. Additionally, we also welcome contributions on the following subjects:

[We invite papers for a panel cosponsored with the Sociology of Religion Unit entitled "Believing and Belonging in British Quakerism and Amongst Friends Worldwide."](#) A brief description reads: "This panel will chart the run of decennial surveys of British Quakerism from 1990, analyse the distinctive approach and some of the data from the 2023 British Quaker Survey, and share the methodological framework and initial findings of the first-ever attempt to survey global Quakerism, the 2024 World Survey of Friends. The panel will also discuss the academic value of this kind of quantitative approach and the extent to which its explanatory value is enhanced when combined with interview data." If interested in submitting a paper, please contact Shena Deuchars (shena.deuchars@gmail.com).

If you are interested in presenting a paper related to the Ramallah Friends School or Quakers in Palestine, please contact Andrew Taylor (ataylor9@css.edu).

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

- Stephen Angell
angelst@earlham.edu
- Andrew Taylor, College of St. Scholastica
ataylor9@css.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Quaker Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

If you are an international scholar who might encounter financial or bureaucratic difficulties in attending the November Meeting of the AAR, please contact Andrew Taylor (ataylor9@css.edu) to explore the possibility of presenting online at the June Meeting.

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

- Stephen Angell
angelst@earlham.edu
- Andrew Taylor, College of St. Scholastica
ataylor9@css.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Queer Studies in Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025

presidential theme of freedom in conversation with queer and trans studies in religion, we particularly invite proposals on the following themes and topics:

- In honor of the 25th anniversary of Marcella Althaus-Reid's *Indecent Theology*, papers that constructively, critically, and/or creatively engage with the work of Althaus-Reid and its impact on queer and trans studies in religion.
- In honor of the 50th anniversary of Gayle Rubin's "The traffic in women: notes on the 'political economy' of sex," papers engaging with and exploring the ongoing impact of Rubin's work in queer and trans studies in religion.
- Roundtables or sessions on new books in queer and trans studies, e.g. Ahmad Greene-Hayes, *Underworld Work: Black Atlantic Religion-Making in Jim Crow New Orleans* (University of Chicago Press); M Wolff, *Body Problems: What Intersex Priest Sally Gross Teaches Us About Embodiment, Justice, and Belonging* (Duke University Press). (Open to potential co-sponsorships)
- [For a potential co-sponsored session with the Childhood Studies and Religion Unit](#), we invite proposals at the intersection of queer and trans studies in religion and childhood. This may include queer, trans, and gender-non-conforming youth in historic and contemporary religious studies; revisiting "the figure of the child" and futurity in queer theories; trans youths, public and/or healthcare policy, and religion; the child, religion, and popular culture; anti-/blackness and the queer and/or trans child; trans minors and the *United States v. Skrimetti* case; other topics that take seriously the role of religion in queer and trans childhood.
- [For a potential co-sponsored session with the African Diaspora Religions unit, we invite proposals on the women who made Malcolm X possible](#). 2025 is the 100th anniversary of Malcolm X/el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, revolutionary, civil/human rights activist, and Muslim minister (May 19, 1925 – February 21, 1965). Centering his work on the work Black women do to usher in freedom, and resurrecting from history the love and teachings of his mother, wife, children, and other women who made him possible we have chosen to honor Malcolm by honoring the Black women of his world. Writing on the beautiful intersections between Malcolm, Martin, and James Baldwin and their mothers, *The Three Mothers*, author, Anna Malaika Tubbs asks, "How was Malcolm influenced by Louise Little's roots from the rebellious Carib island nation of Grenada, she, who spoke several languages, her 'home-training' lessons in recitations of the alphabet in French, and admonitions to her children to study, and correct misinformation given by their white teachers?" C. S'thembile West's new book,

Nation Women Negotiating Islam: Moving Beyond Boundaries in the Twentieth Century (2023), redeems the role of women, mothers, sisters, and daughters in the Nation of Islam (NOI). It sits at the intersection of Africana Studies, Religious and Islamic Studies providing the necessary counternarrative to past transgressive discourses. West recognizes and underscores the agency of NOI women in their negotiation of gender norms, sexual propriety, leadership models, education, and family building as a Black national project. Given our current political climate, this book can work as a tool for modeling equity and respectful scholarship on women's roles as organizers, leaders, and change agents dedicated to uplifting and rehabilitating their communities as stewards of West's arguments of a "politics of protection." We invite paper proposals in conversation with this theme and C. S'thembile West's book. We are particularly interested in exploring this theme and this text in conversation with queer and trans studies in religion. For instance, how has the lack of attention to the role of women in Malcolm X's life and work reflect a kind of cis/heteronormativity that is bound up with the white supremacy that Malcom X combatted? How might queer and trans analysis help us better understand this role?

- [For a potential co-sponsored session with the Political Theologies unit, proposals on n secularisms and atheisms in conversation with queer and trans studies in religion, particularly through the lens of freedom.](#)
- Trans and queer religiosity and/or spirituality in Boston; emphasis on oral histories would be welcome, as well as the participation of local activists, artists, culture-bearers, etc. who hold these histories
- Indigenous religious practices
- AI, post-human, and/or digital ethics and embodiment

Statement of Purpose

The core goals of this Unit are as follows: • Foster the application of queer and trans theories 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 and trans studies 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

- Brandy Daniels, University of Portland
brandydaniels@gmail.com
- Elyse Ambrose, University of California, Riverside
eambrose@drew.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

[Queer Studies in Religion Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

We welcome proposals for paper sessions, roundtables, or papers in queer and trans studies in religion broadly, with particular interest in (a) themes and topics we are also considering/hope to cover in the November AAR meeting, and/or (b) proposals exploring contemporary events and popular culture in conversation with queer and trans studies in religion. We also encourage proposals that involve creative presentation formats.

Statement of Purpose

The core goals of this Unit are as follows: • Foster the application of queer and trans theories 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 and trans studies 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

- Brandy Daniels, University of Portland
brandydaniels@gmail.com
- Elyse Ambrose, University of California, Riverside
eambrose@drew.edu

Qur'an Unit

Call for Proposals

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 by Muslims around the world.

In addition to individual paper proposals, the Qur'an Unit welcomes proposals for panels, roundtables, workshops, and other engaging formats.

For the 2025 annual meeting, we are especially interested in proposals highlighting new or developing areas of research in relation to the Qur'an, papers on understudied topics and themes, or that relate to the annual theme of "Freedom" (broadly defined - political, religious, economic, personal, positive, negative, etc.)

Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to provide a forum for comprehensive scholarly discussion of the Qur'an, its reception and interpretation, and its role in Muslim and world societies through a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives. We welcome scholars from all areas of the academy, and scholars of diverse backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, geography, age, and religion to help us achieve our goals of promoting an understanding of the Qur'an.

Chairs

- Halla Attallah
ha409@georgetown.edu
- Samuel Ross
s.ross@tcu.edu

- Shuaib Ally
shuaib.ally@utoronto.ca

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Reformed Theology and History Unit

Call for Proposals

The Reformed Theology and History Unit invites proposals exploring the multifaceted theme of “Freedom” within the Reformed tradition, engaging its historical, theological, ethical, and political dimensions. This broad and generative theme invites academic inquiry from diverse methodological perspectives and disciplines, encouraging contributions that illuminate the past, enrich the present, and shape future discourse.

Theme Description

The Reformed tradition has long grappled with questions of freedom—divine and human, political and religious. This year’s CFP aims to examine how freedom is understood, contested, and expressed in Reformed theology and history. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Freedom:
How has the Reformed tradition considered freedom across contexts and theological categories? Topics might include:
 - Divine sovereignty and human freedom in historical and contemporary debates.
 - Free will, agency, and human personhood.
 - Sin, total depravity, and human freedom.
 - Freedom and authority in scripture and its interpretation.
 - Freedom and the relative authority of church and confession.
 - Political freedom in the Reformed tradition, including its influence on resistance movements and theories of governance.
 - Comparative studies with other traditions (e.g., Lutheran, Catholic) on theologies of freedom.
 - Contemporary challenges to religious freedom in global contexts.
- Historical Perspectives:
 - Contributions of Reformed theologians to political theories of resistance and rights.

- The interplay between Reformed thought and freedom movements in various cultural or national contexts (e.g., the Dutch struggle for independence, South Africa, Korea).
- Global Dialogues:
 - Negotiations of freedom within the global Reformed tradition, including its expressions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
 - Reports and reflections on the upcoming World Communion of Reformed Churches General Council (2025).
- Theological Innovation:
 - The ongoing relevance of Reformed theology in addressing modern social and political challenges.
 - Engagement with lesser-studied figures in the Reformed tradition whose work centers on themes of freedom.
- Freedom and Reform:
 - Intersections between confessional freedom, a commitment to “Reformed and always in need of reform,” and ecumenical collaboration within and beyond the Reformed family.
- [Modern Theology](#):
 In collaboration between the Christian Systematic Theology unit, the Schleiermacher, Modernity, and Religion unit, and the Reformed Theology and History unit, we especially invite proposals on:
 - Freedom in modern theology, especially in and around Friedrich Schleiermacher and 19th century Liberal Theology and its alternatives

Proposal Guidelines

We invite proposals for individual papers and pre-arranged panels. Proposals should clearly articulate their connection to the theme and their potential contribution to the field. Innovative formats and interdisciplinary approaches are especially encouraged.

To ensure a broad and inclusive dialogue, submissions from early-career scholars, scholars from underrepresented backgrounds, and global perspectives are strongly encouraged.

Please submit abstracts via the AAR’s PAPERS system by the stated deadline. Accepted papers may also be considered for co-sponsored sessions with relevant AAR units.

Contact Information

For inquiries, please contact the Reformed Theology and History Unit Steering Committee.

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
a.huijgen@gmail.com
- Christina Larsen, Grand Canyon University
larsen.cn@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Cities Unit

Call for Proposals

The Religion and Cities Unit welcomes paper and panel proposals for the 2025 AAR annual meeting in Boston. In addition to the specific calls described below, we welcome submissions that explore the practice of religion in the city, including papers that cover urban design, architecture, religious approaches to issues of justice in the city, interfaith encounters and collaborations in the city, and the practice of religion in public space.

We especially invite submissions that problematize and expand notions of infrastructure; examine case studies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America; and engage the religious landscape of Boston and surrounding communities. We also encourage scholarship that explores the 2025 AAR Presidential Theme on Freedom.

Religion and Housing. Many countries, including the United States, face housing shortages that have spurred increases in housing costs and

homelessness/houselessness. Religious communities have responded with new approaches to ministry and community-building. We welcome papers that critically engage with such approaches, especially those that occasion interfaith collaborations. This panel might serve as the basis for an edited volume on religion, housing, and homelessness/houselessness.

Religion and Urban Ecology. We invite papers that explore the intersection of religion and urban ecology. Proposals might explore religious responses to urban environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, urban wildlife, and reforestation. Papers might also explore urban religious understandings of indigenous knowledge, interfaith engagements with ecology, local landscapes and ecosystems, environmental justice, the urban soundscape, and the relationship between human beings and other species.

Harvard and the Hood: Religious Scholars and Community Practitioners: We seek papers and panel proposals that consider the theoretical, historical, and/or phenomenological 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. While we are inviting papers examining Boston, this call is open to papers examining scholar-practitioner engagement in any locale. 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.

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. 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
- Fatimah Fanusie
fanusie@icjs.org

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Cities Unit

Call for Proposals

The Religion and Cities Unit welcomes paper and panel proposals for the 2025 AAR June online meeting. We welcome submissions that explore the practice of religion in the city, including papers that cover urban design, architecture, religious approaches to issues of justice in the city, interfaith encounters and collaborations in the city, and the practice of religion in public space.

We especially invite submissions that problematize and expand notions of infrastructure; examine case studies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America; or explore the 2025 AAR Presidential Theme on Freedom.

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. 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
- Fatimah Fanusie
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Religion and Disability Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

In alignment with the presidential theme of freedom, we especially welcome proposals that discuss:

- Intersections of race and disability
- Explorations of madness or psychiatric disability
- Implications of the spatial turn in disability studies
- Anxieties among persons with disabilities and their communities regarding challenges to their civil liberties, healthcare, etc., within the current political climate.

A co-sponsorship with the Body and Religion Unit: A book panel on *Perfect in Weakness: Disability and Human Flourishing in the New Creation* (Baylor University Press, 2023) by Maja I. Whitaker. 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

- David Scott
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- Sarah Jean Barton, Duke University
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Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Disability Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

In alignment with the presidential theme of freedom, we welcome proposals that discuss and analyze the freedoms associated with virtual communities and their relationship to disabled communities, access, and religious participation. Topics addressing the intersections of religion and the virtual space as they support crip intimacy, crip ancestry, accessibility, worshipping communities, formation, and/or education are especially welcome.

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

- David Scott
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- Sarah Jean Barton, Duke University
sarah.j.barton@duke.edu

Religion and Ecology Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 thematic emphasis on “freedom.” As inspired by the Presidential theme, we ask: How is the human claim to freedom entangled with other life forms? If this type of freedom results in environmental degradation and species extinction, is this freedom really free? Is freedom the right of all species? If so, how and why do dominant ideologies control freedom for the rest? In what ways has the promise of freedom for the colonizer, as in westward expansion, Manifest Destiny, private property, and the enclosure of the commons, resulted in environmental degradation and genocide? What are other ways to conceptualize and experience freedom that affirms the rights of all beings?

Broadening one’s understanding of freedom, we are interested in how ecological perspectives open up concepts of freedom to the more than human world. For instance, including non-humans in politics, as with multi-species democracy, thinking of freedom, agency, and will in non-human ways of being and knowing (e.g. how does religion help us understand free agency in plants and fungi?). In other words, how does the intersection of religion and ecology help us frame political freedom (e.g. multi-species democracy, ecofascism, commoning, political representation of non-humans, rights of nature) as well as the freedom of individuals (agency, autonomy, will).

We are also interested in exploring psychological dimensions of freedom in religion and ecology, especially through ecological griefwork. What are some examples of communities doing ecological griefwork? How does hope tie into ecological griefwork? What is the practical significance of hope for self-sustaining and/or survival practices? How, and when, might hopelessness sustain freedom?

In addition, we welcome papers who are engaging in themes of practical survival. Are there case studies of communities, movements, or eco-activists who engage in interpersonal struggle and conflict? What can we learn from groups that are building coalitions who are not unified ideologically? In other words, what does it look like to

partner with groups that have different moral/principled convictions? How can purity prevent ecological work and activism? What gets to “count” as environmentalism, and how does this prevent creative collaborations and fruitful ecological endeavors?

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. We are also interested in including the way intersections of religion and ecology also intersect with other forms of identity (race, class, gender, etc.)

The Religion and Ecology Unit is pursuing possible co-sponsored sessions with the following Units:

[Co-sponsorship with Native Traditions in the Americas](#)

- The Haudenosaunee influence and origins of American Democracy
- Doctrine of Discovery and ecological devastation
- The logic of colonization
- History of colonialism and Native American people and communities
- Land reclamations as a critical response to nationalism
- Indigenous traditions, values, and lifeways as freedom

[Co-sponsorship with the Esotericism Unit](#)

- Esoteric cosmologies that locate divinity within the natural world rather than as a transcendent reality,
- The moral status of nonhumans in esoteric and new religious movements. The sacredness and moral status of the natural world in New Age, Wiccan, Pagan, and Neopagan communities,
- The intersection between new and esoteric religious groups and the radical environmental movement.
- The viability (or lack thereof) of new and esoteric religious groups as effective political actors.
- Analyzing esoteric or new-religious movements that are more conducive to greening than world religions
- Esoteric ecological communities as spaces of freedom and liberation
- Elemental symbolism, paranormal experiences in nature (e.g tree spirits, UFOs/UAPs, familiars) and their ecological significance.

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

- Joseph Wiebe
jwiebe@ualberta.ca
- Kimberly Carfore
kimberly.carfore@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Economy Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

1. Politics of aesthetics, religious sensibilities, and political economy

We are interested in proposals that explore the relationship between the politics of aesthetics, religious sensibilities, and political economy. Potential questions might include:

- How are aesthetic and economic value produced and circulated? How does or has religion shaped such production and circulation?
- What are the limits and possibilities of aesthetic critiques of racial capitalism? Or, more generally, what role can aesthetics or artistic production play in the critique of political economy?
- How does art operate as an otherwise mode of knowing, seeing, and feeling in response to structures domination?
- What are the (religious) aesthetics of fascism?
- What sense of freedom does capitalism produce?
- How do religious settings or spaces cultivate an aesthetic sensibility that aligns with or resists economic systems?
- What is the relationship between a Marxist aesthetics and a Marxist critique of religion?

2. Economies of Caste:

Thinking with Isabel Wilkerson's expansion of the category of caste to demonstrate the intransigence of social hierarchies across cultures, the Religion and Economy unit seeks contributions that think broadly about caste and capitalism in various contexts. We welcome papers thinking through racial capitalism and other systemic structures of exploitation across time and space.

3. Economies of Enslavement and the Costs of Freedom: We invite paper proposals focused on histories of slavery and narratives of enslavement and constraint that explore the moral, social, economic, and emotional costs of freedom and unfreedom across time and space. We especially welcome proposals that address one or more of the following:

1. What are acceptable personal and public costs of political freedom? How do we know? How should histories and theories of settler colonialism, enslavement and coercion, private property, and feudalism intervene in attempts to reckon with the moral and material toll of imperial and ideological expansion?
2. Is it possible to calculate unfreedom's costs when it injures love? When love relationships, families, and romantic partnerships are affected by a poverty of choices, liberties, access, wealth, time, and time-off, who pays (or who in society pays most) for the loss of love? In what ways do coercion and various forms of slavery (e.g., sex trafficking, chattel slavery, incarceration, debt bondage, etc.) impact human and divine love?
3. What do sacred literature and ancient texts reveal about slavery, freedom, and the costs of slavery and freedom in theological imaginaries? and the incalculable debt of divine sacrifice?
4. What are the economies of educational institutions, religious bodies, and seminaries who are studying their legacy in slave trading or pursuing reparative acts for participation in enslavement? What are the implicit and explicit values in these institutions, and how/can efficacy be measured? something on the efficacy of institutions, religious bodies, and seminaries pursuing reparative acts for slave-trading.

For Possible Co-Sponsorship:

- [The Religion and Economy Unit and Religion and the Body Unit invite proposals on Economies of Reproduction/Ethics of Freedom:](#)

We invite proposals that explore intersections of bodies, religion, and economies. We are interested in examining how bodies are shaped, regulated, and transformed through religious and economic frameworks, with a particular focus on themes of reproduction, sovereignty, and freedom.

- Individual Paper proposals or Roundtable proposals might include, but are not limited to:

- The politics of reproductive rights and access, including the role of religion in shaping reproductive policies
- The intersection of religious beliefs and practices with the reproductive industry
- Economic systems that shape reproduction, from reproductive labor to the commodification of fertility and bodily autonomy
- The relationship between bodies, captivity, and freedom in religious and socio-political contexts
- Affect and the embodied experience of reproduction, birth, and bodily autonomy in religious settings
- How religion, bodies, and economies interact to create structures of power, oppression, and resistance

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

- Kati Curts, Sewanee: The University of the South
kacurts@sewanee.edu
- Rebecca Bartel
rbartel@sdsu.edu

Religion and Food Unit

Call for Proposals

Call for Proposals

We seek papers investigating practices and ideas related to food, drink, fasting, feasting, food production, the ethics of production and consumption, or any other aspect of religiously-influenced foodways.

We also welcome panel proposals on topics in religion and food.

Considering religion and food in relation to the Annual Meeting theme on freedom (and un-freedom), we invite papers that consider, for example:

- the relationship of food to freedom, constraint, or lack of freedom;
- “freedom fries” and other cultural/linguistic redefinitions of foods;
- freeganism, dumpster-diving, garbage, afterlives, the trashy, compost, generativity, rot, futurity, toxicity, religious/cultic consumption of nonfoods, indigestibles, cyborg-, and drug-foods.
- critical investigations of “free eating” and “free range” and attendant concepts, including of non-human animal and/as food.

Especially in connection with Black and Indigenous ideas of freedom, we welcome investigations of decolonial diets, as well as those around orthorexia, gastronationalism, and allegations of transgressive eating, eg. of Haitian Americans “eating the ...pets.”

Finally, we welcome geographically-relevant papers, addressing AAR 2025’s location in New England, home to a rich heritage of Native American cultures, early European colonization, and also more recent immigrant communities.

Co-Sponsorships (2):

1) For possible co-sponsorship with the African Diaspora Religions Unit...

Kitchen Table Conversations.

“My childhood breakfast table memories amalgamated aromas of coffee brewing, bacon frying, and burning hair from overheated hot combs” – Scott Alves Barton

Today we recognize that along with other knowledge systems, foodways, and faith traditions traveled with Enslaved Africans, as they do within every individual or group in migration, immigration, or as refugees. Yet, we need to ask, “Who sources, cooks, and preserves our foods, and holds our culinary cultural traditions, whether sacred or profane, in feasting or in famine?” Who do we need to be thankful for that placed this food on our table?” In 1990, MacArthur Genius Carrie Mae Weems created her iconic social documentary “Kitchen Table” a photographic series imagining engagements of kith and kin at table. In addition to potential skirmishes, the kitchen table is always already foundational as a locus of commensality; particular ways of knowing, and intergenerational teaching and learning. Our foodways stories share how we are who we are, and what we hold dear, by lauding sacred rites of communion, sacrifice, and succor. Kitchen tables are also sites of homework, needlework, memorialization, putting food by, flirting, healthcare and beauty practices, gossiping, sharing grace, and prayer. Our tables are centers for healing and mourning, strategizing revolutionary change, or starting a radical feminist press...Quoting poet Joy Harjo, “The world begins at a kitchen table, perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing, crying, eating the last sweet bite...” We welcome folks to submit materials for this roundtable discussion.

[Potential co-sponsorship with African Diaspora Religions: Kitchen Table Conversations](#)

2) For possible co-sponsorship with the Anthropology of Religions Unit...

Anthropology of Food. We are especially interested in papers addressing theoretical, methodological, and ethical innovations that come from engaging with food and foodways.

[Potential co-sponsorship with the Anthropology of Religion Unit: Anthropology of Food](#)

Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides an opportunity for scholars to engage the intersection of religion and food, foodways, and food ethics. We are interested in examining these topics across religious traditions, geographical areas, 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, Brandon University
mulherna@brandonu.ca
- William Schanbacher, University of South Florida
willschanbacher@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Food Unit

Call for Proposals

For potential participation in the summer online meeting, we will consider proposals on any topic related to religion and food.

Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides an opportunity for scholars to engage the intersection of religion and food, foodways, and food ethics. We are interested in examining these topics across religious traditions, geographical areas, 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

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mulherna@brandonu.ca
- William Schanbacher, University of South Florida
willschanbacher@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Human Rights Unit

Call for Proposals

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 *Freedom*, we are particularly interested in proposals on the following topics:

We invite papers that address the fight or struggle for rights and freedoms. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- examination of grassroots movements whose members engage in organized struggle and solidarity on behalf of their own, and/or others', rights and freedoms. The groups in question may or may not be religiously affiliated, but we seek presentations that employ a religious studies lens to understand how these movements pursue the struggle for rights;
- analysis or explanation of "Know Your Rights"-style trainings held by religiously-affiliated, academic, or other groups to educate members of marginalized communities on the content of their rights and how to claim them. We also welcome proposals for a mini-workshop in which a presenter (or panel, in the case of a full panel proposal) demonstrates a "Know Your Rights" or similar training and educates audience members on how to develop such a training;
- proposals that discuss the concept of "struggle" as a religious, social, and political idea, and engage with scholarship on the importance of struggle or agonistic approaches to protection of rights and to human freedom and well-being.

[For a possible co-sponsorship with the Religion and Politics Program Unit, we invite papers that explore the idea and the politics of "religious freedom." Topics may include, but are not limited to:](#)

- legal constructions of religious freedom and how such constructions draw upon, shape, and/or favor particular formulations of religion;
- current efforts to harness religious freedom for the protection/propagation of progressive causes such as reproductive rights, immigration protections, etc.;
- comparative legal, political, and/or cultural discourses of religious freedom.

[For a possible co-sponsorship with the Teaching Religion Unit and the Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit, we invite papers that explore the topic of "academic freedom and freedom of expression." For this co-sponsorship, proposals that are grounded in scholarship of teaching and learning are particularly desired. Topics may include, but are not limited to:](#)

- the relationship between an instructor's academic freedom and their teaching obligations;
- strategies for utilizing religious studies materials for teaching about contentious topics;

- strategies for supporting the academic freedom and free speech rights of students;
- explorations of attacks on academic freedom at the hands of political administrations;
- academic freedom and campus protest.

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.

The Religion and Human Rights unit strives for diversity and critical conversation in its unit makeup and public output. Our selection process for unit steering committee and chairs is open to all who express interest, and we intentionally recruit steering committee members from diverse demographic groups and intellectual and professional experiences. We strive to formulate our calls for papers to encourage submissions and presentations from diverse members of the AAR and to bring to light multiple diverse, critical perspectives on topics in religion and human rights.

The co-chairs compose the Call for Proposals for R&HR sessions for the AAR Annual Meeting. Steering committee members review, shape, and accept proposals for those sessions; review and report on sessions; and often serve as presiders or respondents for particular panels. Co-chairs communicate with the R&HR constituency.

The Steering Committee is made up of nine 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.

Chairs

- Jenna Reinbold
jreinbold@colgate.edu
- Laura Alexander
lealex@unomaha.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Human Rights Unit

Call for Proposals

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 *Freedom*, we are particularly interested in proposals related to freedom and human rights.

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.

The Religion and Human Rights unit strives for diversity and critical conversation in its unit makeup and public output. Our selection process for unit steering committee and chairs is open to all who express interest, and we intentionally recruit steering committee members from diverse demographic groups and intellectual and professional experiences. We strive to formulate our calls for papers to encourage submissions and presentations from diverse members of the AAR and to bring to light multiple diverse, critical perspectives on topics in religion and human rights.

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Chairs

- Jenna Reinbold
jreinbold@colgate.edu
- Laura Alexander
lealex@unomaha.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Memory Unit

Call for Proposals

Communal Amnesia: Religion and the Politics of Forgetting

What do religious communities fail to remember? What are practitioners told to forget? Can forgetting serve as a religious practice? We invite papers or panels that explore the underside of memory studies—forgetting. We are interested in explorations of forgetting, religion, and memory 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.

[Remember the Struggle: Commemorating Sites of Freedom the World Over](#)

[With the Space, Place, and Religion Program Unit](#)

With the conference's theme being "Freedom," and the conference's location at an epicenter of the American Revolution, we invite papers that explore those spaces and places that commemorate struggles for freedom. Why have some places been

preserved? Why have other spaces been forgotten? And what role has religion played in this process? Papers can consider any time, topic, and locale.

[The Afterlives of Memory](#)

[With the Death and Dying Program Unit](#)

How do we preserve the memories of those who are dying? How do we preserve the memories of the dead—both about the deceased and the memories they held? What happens when memory itself dies? And how are ghost stories and other “scary histories” of monsters or ghouls reflect a kind of haunting memory? We welcome papers and panels that examine the material culture and immaterial processes of the afterlives of memory, as well as theoretical studies reflections on what memory’s afterlives tell us about their social and political contexts.

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
ccantwell1@luc.edu
- Ella Myer, Emory University
ella.myer@emory.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Religion and Migration Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

The Religion and Migration Unit seeks both individual paper proposals and panel proposals (presider, three presenters, plus 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 2025 Religion and Migration Unit Call for Papers for the Annual Meeting to be held in Boston, MA welcomes proposals on the following themes:

1. Religion, Migration, and Mass Deportation

“Mass Deportation Now” has become a rallying cry for politicians and pundits alike. In the U.S., Donald Trump’s administration has plans for “the largest deportation operation in American history,” involving governmental and non-governmental actors on all levels of society in targeting people and places that were previously off-limits, such as worshippers and sites of worship. Albeit with a less drastic and draconian rhetoric, such plans have also been proposed beyond the U.S., thus cutting across contexts, countries, and even continents. We seek empirical as well as evaluative papers that explore the role that religion plays in the preparation, production, and problematization of these plans, including accounts of faith-based resistance. Analyses of political and public discourses of mass deportation, including the euphemism “remigration,” are also welcome.

2. Myths, Metaphors, and the Framing of Migration

Migration continues to stir up controversy. Both public and political debates often employ religious myths and religious metaphors to frame the movement of people. Located on a spectrum that reaches from the utopian to the dystopian, these myths and metaphors draw on a variety of faith traditions to present their account of migration as self-evident. Examples include apocalyptic accounts of “uncontrolled mass migration” as a cause for the collapse of the Roman Empire as well as techno-capitalist accounts of humanity’s migration to new planets. We seek papers that explore the understanding and use of religious myths and metaphors in the framing of migration, examining how such frames are conceptualized, communicated, or critiqued by both refugee communities and receiving communities.

[3. Religion and Climate Migration \(co-sponsored with the Religion and Development Unit\)](#)

Changes in environments—often a consequence of rapid and radical anthropogenic climate change—are an increasingly important driver of migration. Despite a consensus

among scholars that the environmental impact on migration is difficult to measure, its significance for the movement of people across the globe needs to be studied. This co-sponsored session seeks proposals that explore the nexus between religion and climate migration from both empirical and explanatory angles, including normative questions. We are interested in receiving proposals for: 1) Case studies of religious beliefs and practices affecting and being affected by climate migration; 2) The collaboration of faith-based organizations in humanitarian and development interventions for climate migrants; 3) The contribution that different and diverse faith traditions make to emerging normative frameworks that aim to address the governance of climate migration; 4) The challenge that climate migration poses to discourse about people on the move, both locally and globally; and 5) Definitional and conceptual debate on the parameters of this emerging area of research on intersections of religion and climate migration.

4. Book Review Panel- (Co-sponsorship Religion & Migration and Bible in America Unit)

This book review panel gathers scholars of U.S. immigration, politics, and apocalyptic ancient and modern to think with and respond to Yii-Jan Lin's *Immigration and Apocalypse: How the Book of Revelation Shaped American Immigration*. The book weaves together U.S. religious history, immigration and ethnic studies, and the use of biblical texts and imagery.

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

- Nanette Spina
spinan@uga.edu
- Ulrich Schmiedel
ulrich.schmiedel@ctr.lu.se

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Politics Unit

Call for Proposals

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 "[Freedom](#)," current events, international engagements with religion and politics, and the conference location of Boston, MA. We invite proposals exploring the larger historical context of Fundamentalism and far-right extremism in American history with awareness of the 100th anniversary of the Scopes Trial, freedom and Boston as an early center of advocacy for freedom of expression and nonconformity, and new forms of criminalization of religious practices around the world.

[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. Potential topics may include but are not limited to:](#)

- the intersectionality of hip hop, religion, and politics with special consideration of the emerging diversity of political stances being embraced by hip hop artists
- exploration of the ways hip hop can encourage both creative freedom and political freedom. This conversation seems especially fitting given the location of the conference in Boston and other Massachusetts communities that have served as intellectual epicenters for transcendentalism, free thought, and artistic pursuits of all kinds throughout American history. In what ways do the creative

impulses of hip hop perpetuate the legacy of free thought through the application of musical artistry to reflections on political and social issues?

- the ways hip hop address the different meanings of “freedom” in the black and white experiences of American history. Can hip hop reframe the American story for minority voices and help us all understand the complexities and ironic costs of “freedom” when some peoples’ ability to enjoy freedom depends on others’ inability to access the benefits of freedom?

[For a possible co-sponsorship with the Religion and Human Rights Unit we invite papers that explore the idea and the politics of “religious freedom.” Topics may include, but are not limited to:](#)

- legal constructions of religious freedom and how such constructions draw upon, shape, and/or favor particular formulations of religion;
- current efforts to harness religious freedom for the protection/propagation of progressive causes such as reproductive rights, immigration protections, etc.;
- comparative legal, political, and/or cultural discourses of religious freedom.

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.

Chairs

- Ann Duncan
ann.duncan@goucher.edu
- Scott Culpepper, Dordt University
scott.culpepper@dordt.edu

Religion and Popular Culture Unit

Call for Proposals

Ethics and Literature: How does genre literature present new visions of “the good life,” and/or alternate ethical systems? We are interested in research spanning romance, sci-fi, and fantasy, and works that engage the content and/ or reception of genre literature.

Religion and Game Worlds: What kinds of religions and religious affects are imagined and enacted in contemporary gaming? We welcome work on tabletop games, video games, online games, and trends that characterize contemporary gaming across formats. (*Note: Please submit work on teaching with games to the co-sponsored call between the Religion, Media and Culture Unit and the Teaching Religion Unit.*)

Optimism and Cheerfulness in Religion and Popular Culture: What do demands for hope, optimism and "good vibes only" tell us about contemporary entanglements of religion and popular culture? What anxieties and aspirations underwrite these demands?

50 Years of Rocky Horror: A celebration of the 50th anniversary of 'The Rocky Horror Picture Show.' We invite proposals on the film and its fandoms, and ideas for a screening accompanied by scholarly intro and discussion.

Ritual and Large Events (for a possible co-sponsored session with the Ritual Studies Unit): We invite proposals that examine the role of ritual in events that draw large crowds, such as concerts, sporting events, conferences, political rallies, and protests.

For possible co-sponsorship with Japanese Religions: We invite proposals that consider how popular culture acts as a medium for religious expression and expression about religion with reference to Japan. We are interested in works that span mediums (movies, television, music, games, material culture), time periods, and places of production/consumption.

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.

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

- David Feltmate, Auburn University, Montgomery
dfeltmat@aum.edu
- Eden Consenstein
Edenc@unc.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Popular Culture Unit

Call for Proposals

We invite proposals for a hands-on, professional development session on teaching religion with popular culture, aimed at graduate students and early career scholars.

Statement of Purpose

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- David Feltmate, Auburn University, Montgomery
dfeltmat@aum.edu
- Eden Consenstein
Edenc@unc.edu

Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

Exploring the Intersection of Religious Education and Other Disciplines

This session seeks to examine approaches to teaching religion in intersection with other subjects, including:

- Art
- Literature
- History
- Civics, Citizenship, and Government
- Sciences
- Social Sciences

We welcome proposals that explore the integration of religion education into these disciplines, as well as those that use these subjects as thematic entry points within religion education courses. Submissions might consider how such intersections enhance pedagogical methods, deepen students' understanding of religion, and foster critical thinking about the role of religion in broader societal contexts and explore the integration of the study of religion into other disciplines and subjects in the absence of stand-alone religion courses.

We particularly encourage proposals that engage with the Presidential Theme and align with the focus of our unit. Additionally, we welcome submissions outside these themes, including pre-arranged sessions offering global perspectives on religion education.

We value sessions that embrace diversity across genders, racial/ethnic backgrounds, and a spectrum of fields, methodologies, and scholarly levels.

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
- Kate Soules
Ksoules@religionanded.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives **Unit**

Call for Proposals

Global Overview of Teaching Religious Freedom

Religious freedom in public schools encompasses the concepts of freedom *of* religion, freedom *from* religion, and freedom *in* religion, making it a multifaceted and context-dependent topic. How religious freedom is understood and taught in schools varies widely across the globe, reflecting differing cultural, societal, and legal frameworks. The practical realization of religious freedom in education is influenced by pedagogical methods, curricular materials, learning objectives, and local priorities, which in turn shape how religious freedom is conveyed and practiced. These approaches also include diverse interpretations of religious freedom across different countries and contexts. This session invites papers that explore case studies from different countries to examine how public schools teach religious freedom, theoretically and practically.

Statement of Purpose

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Chairs

- Angela Bernardo, Sapienza University of Rome
angela.bernardo@uniroma1.it
- Kate Soules
Ksoules@religionanded.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Science Fiction Unit

Call for Proposals

Individual papers and panel sessions are invited on the following themes:

- We seek proposals on Speculative Fiction's (SF) use in the religious studies classroom to illustrate topics and problems in the study of religion. We are especially interested in proposals that suggest how SF (text, theory) challenges the very understanding of "religion" and how such challenges can be posed in the classroom. We encourage proposals from advanced graduate students. We will not consider full panel proposals unless individual papers are articulated.
- We are interested in how "traditional" religious organizations are represented in "off world" / space / other worlds. We note, for example, the theme of Jesuits in space in the science fiction canon; the Latter-Day Saint Ship (L.D.S.S.) *Nauvoo* in *The Expanse* series; Mel Brooks' "Jews in Space" segment in *The History of the World, Part 1*. How are common themes, issues, and theological sources and

norms altered by detaching religious bodies from their earth-based histories and cultural formations.

- [For a joint session with the Tibetan and Himalayan Religious Unit](#) we are looking for papers that pair a Tibetan/Himalayan Buddhist narrative source of any genre with a piece of speculative fiction to explore one of the following thematic binaries: freedom/oppression, imagination/reality, enlightenment/delusion, birth/death, or humanity/other sentience. The focus is on the ways that liberation narratives in both Tibetan/Himalayan Buddhism and speculative fiction may serve as mutually enriching heuristic devices for deepening interpretation and understanding.
- In response to the 2025 Annual Meeting theme "Freedom" we seek proposals that explore Speculative Fiction's pursuit of freedom and species flourishing through resistance to authoritarian regimes real and imagined.
- We are always interested in proposals that apply Speculative Fiction theory to provoke mutation in the study of religion.

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 invites comparison, exchange, and mutation in the study of religion.

Chairs

- James Thrall, Knox College
jthrall@knox.edu
- Rudy V. Busto, University of California, Santa Barbara
rude@religion.ucsb.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and Sexuality Unit

Call for Proposals

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 Freedom.

+ *Religion and sexual fear, violence, and intimidation*: Considering narratives and practices of resistance, suffering, and justice especially those that are not isolated from other liberation projects; uses of story-telling, coalition building, and trauma studies from a wide variety of geographies and religious traditions.

+ *Against/Beyond Marriage*: Considering hetero-coupling as a tool, rather than a goal of human thriving; marriage and religious nationalisms; contemporary and creative framings in relation to sexual politics and social justice; theoretical and conceptual innovations when considering these intersections.

+ *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.

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
mosle1sj@cmich.edu
- Megan Robertson
m.a.robertson@leeds.ac.uk

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion and the Social Sciences Unit

Call for Proposals

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 all proposals on any topic broadly related to religion and the social sciences, and encourage creative formats such as flash sessions, roundtables, discussion-based, collaborative sessions, etc.

If you think our unit is a good fit for your proposal, please be sure to select it as your first choice.

For the 2025 meeting in Boston, in addition to general topics in religion and the social sciences, we are interested in papers, papers session, and roundtable proposals that offer social scientific methodological and/or theoretical analyses in regard to:

- Religious Pluralism and Academic Freedom in our Current Political Climate: This is a fraught political moment. In light of this, we invite social scientific research and analysis on increasing limits on academic freedom and free speech in religious studies and theology classrooms, particularly as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the contingent faculty vulnerability. We also invite papers that explore the complex (and sometimes contested) role of religion in the university and how this shapes approaches to religious pluralism/religious minorities/religious diversity and the impact this has for work our work with students as well as our own scholarship

- Religion, Abolition, and Freedom of Movement: We invite papers that offer social scientific and empirically-based analyses of freedom of movement and geographical mobility, particularly as this relates to carcerality, migration, border crossing, and movement in occupied territory (e.g. Palestine and Ukraine), including but not limited to
 - Fugitivity and Black Religion
 - Abolitionist and Liberation Theologies and the Social Sciences
 - Incarceration and Prison Abolition
 - Sanctuary
 - Border Justice
 - Border Abolition
 - Role of religion in border justice/border abolition and sanctuary movements
 - Role of religion in restricting freedom of movement
 - Impact of efforts to restrict freedom of movement on religious communities/people, especially religious minorities

- Race, Religion, and the Global Politics of Israel and Palestine: Social scientific approaches to religion are increasingly recognizing and reckoning with the many ways that religious and racial identities converge to structure inequalities of power, privilege, experiences of freedom and unfreedom, national recognition, access to resources, and the perpetration and experience of violence. We invite

proposals that explore these dynamics in the context of the global issue of Israel and Palestine. We envision a panel focused on interdisciplinary approaches and rooted in or in conversation with empirical and social scientific methods. Proposals should focus on the intersection of religion and race within Israeli or Palestinian society, in diaspora communities, in relations between Israelis and Palestinians, or in the context of global solidarities with Israel and/ or Palestine. We welcome contemporary or historical approaches that represent a wide range of theoretical perspectives, including comparative religious/political analysis, anti-colonialism, critical race theory, and many others.

- [Religion and Development 2025-2030 \(co-sponsored with International Development and Religion\)](#): The next five years will be a momentous and potentially tumultuous time for development agendas. In the run up to the end of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030 and the incoming Trump administration in the US and its effects on international development funding and practices, shifts in our understandings of faith-based development, localization, the role of local faith actors, freedom of religion and belief, and strategic religious engagement are likely to evolve. We are interested in papers that speak to these evolutions:
 - The effects on FBOs of shifts in development policy between US administrations
 - The effects of religious freedom framings on development as a priority area of interest under Trump administrations
 - A focus on local faith actors and localization in humanitarian and development work
 - How strategic religious engagement is being conceived and implemented in development practice
 - Planning for 2030 and how to include faith actors in the post-2030 agenda
 - Reflections on faith actor roles in advocacy for an implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and what should be learned for post-2030

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
- Sara Williams, Fairfield University
sawilliams212@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion in Europe Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

[For a possible cosponsored session with the Science, Technology & Religion Unit:](#)

[AI Development in Europe - implications for religion](#)

Religious representation in AI models is critical to ensuring that these systems fairly and accurately reflect the plurality of beliefs, practices, and worldviews present in global societies. Addressing this gap is especially urgent as LLMs and other AI systems increasingly mediate sensitive cultural, ethical, and social interactions. This panel invites proposals that explore related topics, such as:

- The role of religious scholars, communities, and organizations in shaping AI design and governance;
- Historical examples of how religious scholars, communities, and organizations have intervened in technology developments (for good or ill);
- The ethical and technical challenges of including religious diversity in AI training datasets.

[*For a possible cosponsored session with the Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit and the Vatican II Unit:*](#)

[60th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate](#)

2025 marks the 60th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the groundbreaking Vatican II declaration on the Church's relationship with non-Christian religions. To commemorate this milestone, the Interreligious and Interfaith Studies, Religion in Europe, and Vatican II units invite proposals for a co-sponsored panel that explores the enduring significance, challenges, and future implications of Nostra Aetate in European, North American, and other contexts.

We welcome papers that critically engage with the following themes:

- The historical and political context of Nostra Aetate and its development.
- The impact of Nostra Aetate on Christian-Jewish, Christian-Muslim, or other interfaith relations.
- The role of Nostra Aetate in shaping Catholic and interreligious dialogue today.
- The reception of Nostra Aetate by non-Christian religious communities and secular actors.
- The relevance of Nostra Aetate in contemporary Europe amidst rising secularization, religious pluralism, and global challenges such as Islamophobia and antisemitism.
- Critical perspectives on the limitations of Nostra Aetate, including voices marginalized by its framework.

This panel aims to foster a rich, interdisciplinary dialogue that examines how Nostra Aetate has shaped and continues to shape interreligious dynamics and religious identities in an increasingly pluralistic world.

Proposals from diverse disciplinary and methodological perspectives are encouraged.

[*For a possible cosponsored session with the Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit:*](#)

[The German Peasants War at 500](#)

2025 marks the 500th anniversary of the suppression of the German Peasants War (1524-1525), the largest popular uprising in Europe before the French Revolution. This panel seeks to reconsider intersections of church reform, early Lutheran theology, economic grievance, and political thought in this movement and its aftermath. We particularly invite papers that consider the shifting rhetorics of violence and nonviolence in Protestant theology and biblical criticism in the years following the Peasants War.

New work on contemporary France: Islam, Pluralism, and Religious Difference

In this proposed panel session, Carol Ferrara, author of [Muslim and Catholic experiences of national belonging in France](#) (2024), and Kirsten Wesselhoeft, author of [Fraternal Critique: The politics of Muslim community in France](#) (2025), will briefly discuss their books, especially in relation to one another, before welcoming responses from discussants representing a range of perspectives on religion. We invite brief statements of interest from potential discussants, who would receive copies of the books and focus on several chapters from each.

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.

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

- John McCormack, Aurora University
jmccormack@aurora.edu

- Tyson Herberger
tyson.herberger@usn.no

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion in Europe Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

For our June online meeting session, we are especially considering proposals related to:

Religious Responses to Trumpism in Europe

- We welcome papers examining how European religious communities, groups, and leaders have responded to the global influence of Trumpism, including its intersections with right-wing populism and Christian nationalism. Contributions may also explore representations of these dynamics in cultural works like "Green Border," or their impact on interfaith relations, migration, and socio-political discourses in Europe.

We also welcome proposals beyond this theme, 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.

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

- John McCormack, Aurora University
jmccormack@aurora.edu
- Tyson Herberger
tyson.herberger@usn.no

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion in Premodern Europe and the Mediterranean Unit

Call for Proposals

We welcome proposals on all topics related to religion in premodern Europe and the Mediterranean, especially Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Our Program Unit facilitates comparative analysis of these traditions and explores the history of their entanglements. 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:

- Premodern Religion and Ideas of Freedom
- Kabbalah - This session will focus on Kabbalah as esoteric Jewish tradition and on its parallels and encounters in the Muslim and Christian worlds.
- Teaching Religion through Reacting to the Past Games - "Reacting to the Past" is a set of role playing games and simulations of historical situations that create an engaged learning experience for students. This session will involve speakers who have used the games and can share reviews, particular experiences, and caveats.

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
claire@celestiscuria.org
- Lora Walsh, University of Arkansas
ljwalsh@uark.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion in Southeast Asia Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2024 business meeting:

- Multiple epistemologies in Southeast Asia
- Geography of friendship
- Liberation movements in Southeast Asia
- Environmental justice in Southeast Asia
- Intersectionality of animals, humans, and forests
- Religion, resistance, violence, nationalism, and freedom

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

- David Thang Moe, Yale University
david.moe@yale.edu
- MK Long, Dartmouth College
mklong10@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit

Call for Proposals

The Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit invites proposals for panels and individual presenters that explore the affective, noncognitive, and passional dimensions of religion. We actively invite presentation formats that reimagine the space of the academic conference.

For the 2025 annual meeting, we are particularly interested in proposals that address either of two themes.

Presidential Theme: Freedom

Drawing on the 2025 presidential theme, we invite proposals that explore intersections of freedom, religion, and affect. In line with our commitment to engaging diverse fields, we encourage broad interpretations of each of these concepts. Some viable ideas include the affective and religious dynamics of:

- freeing and being freed
- revolution
- academic freedom
- bodily autonomy
- desiring freedom
- misappropriating the language of freedom

Shadow Conference 2025: Organizing in and around the Academy

In 2023 and 2024, Religion, Affect, and Emotion held "shadow conference" sessions in which presenters and attendees explored the topics that are often discussed only in the times and spaces in between formal AAR sessions. In 2023, our shadow conference sessions focused on the experiences of exhaustion and debility that accompany us in our academic institutional lives. In 2024, these conversations continued, but two themes emerged as particularly energizing: the affective labor of organizing and the possibilities of parainstitutional practices.

In 2025, then, we invite proposals that move us past narration and analysis of the troubles of our academic institutional lives, toward constructive and imaginative explorations of the ways in which we might transform or find breathing room within those lives.

What is involved in organizing our individual and collective lives in ways that are responsive to the experiences of exhaustion and debility that so many of us share in common?

As always, in our "shadow conference" we welcome the playful bending of usual presentation norms and forms. Given the past two years' lively conversation, we are once again 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

- Marvin Wickware
marvin.wickware@lstc.edu
- Shea Watts
s.watts@wingate.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit

Call for Proposals

2025 AAR Call for Papers: Religion, Colonialism, Postcolonialism

In addition to papers and proposals dealing with religion, colonialism, and post-colonialism more broadly, we invite papers on the following topics:

- [“Palestine in the Study of Religion” \(panel co-sponsored with Cultural History of the Study of Religion\)](#)

Building on the success of the 2024 session “Constitutive Absence? The Cultural History of Palestine in the Study of Religion,” we invite papers that advance this project of addressing the historical (if disavowed) presence of Palestine, Palestinians, and the global anti-colonial struggle for Palestine liberation in the field.

- Book panel: Sally M. Promey, *Religion in Plain View: Public Aesthetics of American Display* (Chicago, 2024)

- [“Is Freedom a ‘Secular’ Category?” \(panel co-sponsored with Secularism and Secularity\)](#)

Is “Freedom” a Secular Category? Drawing from the 2025 AAR presidential theme of “freedom,” we invite proposals that seek to critically interrogate how the very concept of “freedom” has been theorized, valued, and enacted within the organizing logics of

Western secularism. Though recent scholarship has inquired into the Christian theological underpinnings of the category within Western thought and the mobilization of “freedom” rhetoric within and through projects of colonialism and empire-building, less focus has been placed on how “freedom” is conceptualized and articulated within modern political discourse.

Especially amid the intense political polarization in the contemporary United States, various groups invoke the language of “freedom” to engage concerns of religious liberty, substantive equality, and protections against state action—sometimes to dramatically different ends but often within putatively secular registers. We are interested in further showcasing work that strives to better document and analyze this “freedom” discourse as it relates to the study of secularism and secularity.

How does the secular function as a concept, which transfers theological grammars into political meanings that frame the globalization of western nation-state logics, and ongoing colonial structuration of relations between the so-called global north and global south? Here, following critiques of feminist studies, queer studies, Black studies and postcolonial studies, how is what is indexed as religion used to mark the gendered, sexed, raced and colonial underside of Freedom. What opportunities emerge from this under (or other) side, often called religion, to disrupt, decolonize or dismantle political-theological practices of freedom built on an other?

- Pentecostalism and the postcolony
- Theorizing relationships between settler and non-settler colonialisms
- Colonialism and space exploration
- The coloniality of US anti-colonialism
- Gender and decolonial epistemologies
- Colonialism and ecotheology

- Settler colonialism and Marxism, in particular the role of “primitive accumulation” and “commodity fetishism” in these debates
- Secularism and/or liberalism of liberation

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 Boston.

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

- Adam Stern, University of Wisconsin, Madison
adam.stern@wisc.edu
- Marlon Millner, Northwestern University
marlonmillner2021@u.northwestern.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit

Call for Proposals

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.

Call for Proposals for 2025 November Annual Meeting

- The 2025 AAR presidential theme for the annual meeting is "Freedom," so we seek proposals that demonstrate concern for how film and visual media intersect with freedom, sovereignty, injustice, and unfreedom. In what ways have films and visual narratives opened up the possibilities for expanding freedoms of individuals and societies? And in what ways have they been used to limit or hinder freedoms, religious and otherwise?
- Keywords in the Study of Religion, Film, and Visual Culture: What theories, practices, or themes are critical for our study? What are the new vocabularies emerging that set the scope and horizon of our future research? We are interested in papers, panels, and roundtables that consider and explore the changing landscape of the "religion and film" scholarly conversation in our contemporary era.
- Propaganda and Visual Culture: What is the role of visual culture in religious indoctrination? How are images used to promote public norms and religious consensus? We seek proposals that examine the relationships between visual culture and propaganda across various religious contexts, such as religious nationalism, high control communities, supremacy groups, liberation movements, etc.
- Film Adaptation and Religion: What translation work goes into adaptation? How does it affect the new artistic production? How should we account for the tension between the original piece and the new creation? What are the losses and gains of such transpositions, and how have they been utilized in religious contexts and communities? We seek proposals exploring the adaptation, creation, and reception of such audiovisual works. Film adaptation may encompass a variety of visual media, including cinema, television, advertisements, museum installations, photography, graphic design, video curriculum, YouTube, online social media (e.g., Instagram, TikTok), digital communication (e.g., Zoom calls), 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 sociopolitical groups, particularly marginalized communities.
- Key Scholarly Monographs: We're interested in organized panels focused on monographs centered on the subject of religion, film, and visual culture published in 2024 or 2025. These panels can take the form of critical review, generative roundtable 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.

- [POV in Film and Religion \(co-sponsored with the Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit\)](#): What is the craft of artistic creation? How do technical creative choices reflect or affect religious sensibilities and identities? We seek proposals that explore how the interpretive aesthetics of artists—such as cinematography, point of view, framing, editing, angles, exhibition, etc.—shape viewers' emotional and affective reception of them.
- [The Ethicist as Hero \(co-sponsored with the Ethics and Religion Unit\)](#): The 2024 film *Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin.* ignited criticism from scholars who argued that it distorts Dietrich Bonhoeffer's legacy and promotes a message at odds with his writings. Similar criticism has been levied at *Gandhi* (1982), *Confucius* (2010), *Hannah Arendt* (2012), and *Restless Heart: The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (2012). Do the historical figures who appear on ethics course syllabi also belong on the silver screen? What are the benefits and dangers of looking to the lives of philosophers and theologians for inspiration and entertainment? How have storytellers done this responsibly or irresponsibly in the past, and what lessons can be learned from analyzing their efforts?

Statement of Purpose

The Religion, Film, and Visual Culture 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
- Kristian Petersen
kristianpetersen20@mac.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit

Call for Proposals

Call for Proposals for 2025 Online June Meeting

For the online meeting, we invite individual paper submissions or full panel proposals on any theme related to Religion, Film, and Visual Culture. We are especially interested in proposals on the following:

- International Film and Religion: While Hollywood cinema has dominated the global film market it reflects the particular religious sensibilities and communities of North American creators and audiences. How are global religious practices, ideas, and communities taken up in international cinema? We seek proposals on the analysis of films and cinematic environments revolving around religion in African, Asian, South American, or Oceania.

Statement of Purpose

The Religion, Film, and Visual Culture 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
- Kristian Petersen
kristianpetersen20@mac.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit

Call for Proposals

- We invite proposals that consider of how the accusations of genocide in Gaza are impacting interreligious dialogue in the United States and elsewhere. Topics

may include, but are not limited to: how the accusation of genocide in Gaza impacts specific interreligious dialogue initiatives among faith communities; how the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism may or may not impede academic or religious freedom.

- [Co-sponsored with the Teaching Religion Unit](#), we seek proposals for a session that addresses the challenges associated with teaching religion and genocide in the current political climate. Topics may include, but are not limited to: diverging scholarly, political, and popular uses of the term "genocide" (as applicable in the classroom); teaching genocide in politically polarized classrooms; the challenges and opportunities of teaching genocide prevention in partnership with community organizations or nonprofits.
- 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 invite proposals that explore the potential status of genocide survivors as sacred persons, and their testimonies as sacred texts. Proposals might consider the ethical questions of how we critically assess their contributions to public discourse about the memory of genocides, their representation in museum and educational contexts, and responses to situations (e.g. with the Holocaust) in which they are increasingly unable to speak in person about their experiences.

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
bsax@icjs.org
- David Tollerton
d.c.tollerton@exeter.ac.uk

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit

Call for Proposals

We seek proposals that address the genocidal aspects of European colonialism by historically linking or comparing the genocide of Indigenous Peoples, US Slavery, and the Holocaust. This approach may include an explicit assessment of or engagement with Raoul Peck's [Exterminate All the Brutes](#)—which he describes as tracing the origins of white supremacy through historically linking the genocide of Native Americans, US Slavery, and the Holocaust—or any comparative historical or conceptual analysis between any of these two atrocities. A comparison that includes a case of a genocide of Indigenous Peoples is of particular interest.

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
bsax@icjs.org
- David Tollerton
d.c.tollerton@exeter.ac.uk

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion, Media, and Culture Unit

Call for Proposals

The Religion, Media, and Culture Unit invites individual presentations, paper/multimedia research presentation sessions, and roundtable proposals on the following themes:

“Freedom to” and “Freedom From” (2025 Presidential Theme): If people have democratized access to participate in online public discourse, what are the limitations of such discourse? Is such information even useful as objects of study or productive for the generation of public policy – given issues of disproportionate demographics, online trolling, algorithmic bias, news enclaves, and disinformation? While individuals may have the freedom to consume marginalized content, create new media, or navigate alternative digital spaces, how important are issues of social protection for our non-digital selves – that is, *freedom from* material and oppressive norms, hegemonic structures, and the like?

“Don’t Read the Comments”: We welcome proposals that offer a broad analysis of multimedia or transmedia discourse, especially those that comment and reflect on larger socio-cultural dynamics. Objects of study could include Discord and Twitch chats,

Tweets and other social media posts, YouTube comments, (sub)reddits, film, game, and other media reviews, online articles, video game playthroughs and commentaries, and memes.

[Digital Games/Gaming in the Religious Studies Classroom](#) (co-sponsored by the Teaching Religion Unit): We welcome presentations on and/or demonstrations of innovative teaching methods and styles using various digital platforms with a particular focus on games/gaming in the religious studies classroom. We hope to facilitate discussions that evaluate any obstacles that arise when teaching said media in the classroom. Potential concerns include accessibility in terms of cost, skill, and socialization; relevancy and/or triviality; assignment of relevant scholarship; and evaluation of experiential learning. What new possibilities, for instance, are presented in the study and teaching of games in religious studies? How do we begin to recognize “religion” or the “religious” imaginary in games and other media?

[Technology and Ritual](#) (co-sponsored by the Ritual Studies Unit): We invite proposals that investigate the use of technology, automation, or artificial intelligence in religious ritual or ceremony. Examples could include a robotic arm performing aarti in India, electric wheelchairs made available to the elderly or disabled in Mecca, or Mindar, an AI-robot priest in Japan. This session also welcomes discussions of aniconism and/or technophobia across religious and world traditions.

[Healing & Religion in the Digital Era](#) (co-sponsored by the Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit): How do religious or spiritual healing discourses and practices evolve amidst new technologies, digitality, and the (mis)information era? How is religious authority and expertise in health and medicine re-evaluated within online spaces? We welcome analyses of illness, affliction, and suffering across religious traditions, geographic regions, and forms of new media. We are particularly interested in how fractured identities, political divides, structural violence, and/or colonialism impact the affliction and healing of social bodies through material and/or digital spaces.

Open Call: We solicit research-based papers and pre-arranged panels on any topic related to the study of religion, media, and culture, from any region or time period.

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.

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

- Sana Patel, University of Ottawa
spate161@uottawa.ca
- William Chavez, Stetson University
wchavez@stetson.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religion, Sport, and Play Unit

Call for Proposals

The Religion, Sport, and Play Unit seeks individual paper and panel proposals for two sessions at the 2025 annual conference.

Playing video games (or gaming) is now a predominant recreational activity for millions and millions of people. As a billion-dollar industry alone, eSports attracts the attention of players, fans, and spectators alike. Popular games, in virtual, RPG, augmented realities, now allow for world-building/making and many draw on religious themes and narratives for their efficacy.

This session seeks individual papers or panel proposals that address the relationship between religion and gaming/gaming culture. Topics might include but are not limited to:

- Games, World Building, and Qualities of Religion
- Lived Religion and Online/VR Game Play
- Religious Themed Computer and Virtual Games

For the second session, any paper or panel proposals addressing the interaction of religion and sport; religion and play; or religion, sport, and play will be considered.

However, priority will be given to proposals addressing the connections and/or disruptions regarding gender, religion, and sport/play. What approaches help elucidate how gender gets politicized, regulated, and adjudicated within spaces of sport/play, and what are the lived realities under the gender binary? What, if any, is religion's relationship to these situations? Topics might include but are not limited to:

- Religious Attitudes, Gender Variations/Resistance, and Sport
- Gendered Bodies and Lived Religion
- WNBA, Caitlyn Clark, and Iconography

The Religion, Sport, and Play Unit is committed to inclusion. Our Unit requires pre-arranged sessions or panel proposals to incorporate gender diversity; diversity of race, ethnicity, and rank are also highly encouraged.

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

- Jeffrey Scholes, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
jscholes@uccs.edu

- Kimberly Diaz, University of California, Riverside
kdiaz038@ucr.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit

Call for Proposals

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 Latine/x religion in North America. We invite critical engagements with this year's theme on "freedom"—liberal and liberationist notions of "freedom" including freedom of religion and expression or freedom of movement, such as how indigeneity, race, and diasporic identities are transformed by movement or displacement.

Members of our steering committee are particularly interested in:

- Museum studies
- Theory and method in the study of América Latina
- The circulation of Christian nationalisms
- Global detention and displacement
- How scholars have been incorporating new research into their 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 see our co-sponsored call with our colleagues in the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit](#) on *Sanctuary Everywhere: The Fugitive Sacred in the Sonoran Desert* by Barbara Sostaita focusing on the themes of borders, fugitivity, migration, sacred space, sanctuary practices, and lived religion. Please email Wendy Mallette (wendy.mallette@ou.edu) if you would like to be considered as a respondent.

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

- Daisy Vargas
daisyvargas@email.arizona.edu
- Justin Doran, Middlebury College
jmdoran@middlebury.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

[Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

If you are interested in participating in the AAR's new online-only June meeting, please feel welcome to submit proposals that indicate your specific interest in this 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

- Daisy Vargas
daisyvargas@email.arizona.edu
- Justin Doran, Middlebury College
jmdoran@middlebury.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025, we welcome any proposal that addresses our goals, and we have a particular interest in the following themes:

- ["Freedom By Another Name: Medicine & Healing in the Era of Slavery."](#) Co-sponsored by the Afro-American Religious History Unit, Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit, and the African Diaspora Religions Unit.
This panel is open to a variety of submissions, including analyses of the use of plant medicines, prayers, divination, laying of hands, ritual baths, and sacred ceremonies used for healing purposes among African descendants in the era of slavery. We welcome studies of slavery in Africa and/or the African Diaspora. We also invite proposals that examine how Western medicine was weaponized as an extension of colonial power to further control Black people and keep their bodies in bondage. We are especially interested in proposals that address how enslaved people experienced harrowing conditions of enslavement, faced immense challenges of illness and physical suffering, but also sought freedom and empowerment through the sustained practice of African traditional healing rites.
- ["Healing & Religion in the Digital Era"](#).
Co-sponsored by the Religion, Media & Culture Unit
How do religious or spiritual healing discourses and practices evolve amidst new technologies, digitality, and the (mis)information era? How is religious authority and expertise in health and medicine re-evaluated within online spaces? We welcome analyses of illness, affliction, and suffering across religious traditions, geographic regions, and forms of new media. We are particularly interested in how fractured identities, political divides, structural violence, and/or colonialism impact the affliction and healing of social bodies through material and/or digital spaces.
- ["Public Policy, Religion, and Healing"](#)
[Co-Sponsored by the Bioethics and Religion Unit](#)
This panel will examine the dynamic relationships between individual freedom and collective responsibility in the context of public health and health policy. We invite proposals that explore the intersections of religion, healing, and public policy, with a focus on the tensions between government interventions and individual autonomy. In the wake of the Dobbs decision, we particularly welcome papers that examine the complex dynamics between individual reproductive justice and government interventions, exploring the broader implications for

autonomy and public policy. We also invite contributions that investigate how religious beliefs and practices shape sexual and reproductive health policies, including their impacts on intimate partner violence and harm. We are especially interested in work that explores collective efforts to advocate for freedom in the face of structural barriers. Additionally, this panel seeks papers that critically analyze theories of health promotion and autonomy within public health initiatives, as well as religious exemptions to public health mandates. We encourage submissions from diverse methodological approaches, including public health, theology, religious studies, sociology, political science, and bioethics.

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.

Statement of Purpose

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

- Kristy Slominski, University of Arizona
kristy.slominski@gmail.com
- Kyras Malika Daniels, Boston College
kyrah.malika.daniels@emory.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit

Call for Proposals

For the June online sessions, the Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit again welcomes individual paper proposals for short presentations (5-10 minutes) that explore pedagogical approaches and examples related to teaching courses and/or educating the public 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 or developing public resources in this area.

The Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit is committed to the value of diversity, equity, and social justice in our standards of excellence.

Statement of Purpose

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

- Kristy Slominski, University of Arizona
kristy.slominski@gmail.com
- Kyrah Malika Daniels, Boston College
kyrah.malika.daniels@emory.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit

Call for Proposals

"For Our Freedom, They Must Go! Authoritarianism, Islamophobia, Anti-Latinx Narratives and the Imaginaries of Resistance"

At the turn of the 21st century, Samuel Huntington identified the United States as a nation of settlers facing multiple threats to its constitution, including Muslims and Latinx populations. Over the past two decades, both groups have become central targets in the discursive strategies of international fascism, now in power in the US and in multiple spaces throughout the world. In collaboration with the *Contemporary Islam, Latino/a Religion, Culture, and Society* and *Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Studies* units, we invite proposals that show entanglements in one or more of these topics:

Narratives of white genocide and replacement, particularly regarding Muslim and/or Latinx immigration.

- The new right-wing co-optation of Muslim and/or Latinx populations.
- New religioracial perspectives on whiteness in the United States regarding the future inclusion of a "Middle Eastern or North African" designation in the US Census
- They Are Eternal Foreigners: The denaturalization of longstanding Muslim and/or Latinx histories, memories, or individuals.
- Conspiracy theories that link Muslim and/or Latino Immigration with a Jewish plot to destroy Western civilization.
- Religious resistance against state oppression: Cross-cultural, Muslim and/or Latinx experiences.
- The intersection of Islamophobia and anti-Latinx sentiment with anti-Black racism, Sinophobia, anti-Native racism, and/or antisemitism.
- Liberationist and decolonial frameworks in resistance to racist and authoritarian structures.
- Fascism as "colonialism turned inward:" What the US and Europe can learn from Global South struggles?
- Doctrines of National/International Security, New Red/Green/Brown-scares.
- Conflictive Narratives of 'Freedom' and American consciousness.

Decolonizing "Internationalism": Impoverishing the Nations

2025 marks the 80th anniversary of World War II's end, the United Nations's formation,

and the beginning of global conflicts often framed as the “Cold War.” The Liberation Theologies Unit and the Religion and Peace Unit invite proposals for a special panel that examines the complex relationships between international organizations, Western conceptions of global peace, and the rising intra- and extra-state conflicts over the past eight decades. We particularly welcome proposals that explore the role of religion in both fueling these conflicts and offering alternatives to violence and oppression. We invite submissions for both the June online meeting and the November in-person meeting in Boston. To foster inclusivity, we may prioritize international scholars who are typically unable to attend the in-person meeting for the June session, while reserving space in November for our usual constituencies. Proposals may address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- international law and the Gaza genocide against Palestinians
- Unjust peace and the role of international organizations.
- Pacification plans from above that failed.
- "The North is Cold because the South is Hot": Cold War lessons from Global South/East perspectives.
- International networks of repression in the Global South.
- Why do Western democracies support non-Western autocracies?
- Are we living through a new red scare?
- The Spirit of Bandung as an international network today.

[Religion, Art, and Political Reimagination](#)

The Art, Literature, and Religion Unit and The Religion, Social Conflicts, and Peace Units are seeking papers for a co-sponsored session on " We are interested in exploring the role of religion in art and the production, disruption, and reconfiguration of political imagination. We are likewise interested in identifying the relevance of art and religious meaning-making and remaking in processes of social and political protests and visions of alternative political futures.

We seek papers that focus on the following (not an exhaustive list of topics):

- religion and literatures of resistance, exile, and annihilation
- protest art and slogans
- art and disruption of weaponized religious symbols
- art, religion, and the imagination of justice
- art, religion, and political domination
- art amid genocide

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
- Santiago H. Slabodsky
santiago.slabodsky@hofstra.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit

Call for Proposals

Decolonizing “Internationalism”: Impoverishing the Nations
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Statement of Purpose

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Chairs

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aomer1@nd.edu
- Santiago H. Slabodsky
santiago.slabodsky@hofstra.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Religious Conversions Unit

Call for Proposals

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 2025 annual meeting.

Conversion and abolition

In keeping with the Presidential Theme for the 2025 AAR, we invite papers that explore the way converts and evangelists pursue, define, and deny “freedom.” How does conversion provide a context for the assertion of autonomy, 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. Contact: Calvin Cummings - cummi726@umn.edu

Reconstructing Religion

As people adjust to a rapidly changing culture, their attachment to and understanding of their inherited religion inevitably changes. What catalyzes this process of “deconstruction,” reevaluation, and reconstruction? Where and to whom are these silent deconversions, or inner conversions, happening? What is gained when we examine this comparatively, considering this process in traditions beyond Christianity, and in historical moments beyond our own? Contact: Kathleen Self - kself@stlawu.edu

Online Conversions/Deconversions

We live our lives online today, including our religious lives. What do scholars of religious conversion have to contribute to the analysis and theorization of how conversion and deconversion takes place online today? What is the role of influencers in this process? Methodologically, what is the best way to make sense of ongoing conversion in the "comments"? How do researchers responsibly and ethically navigate implicit or explicit expectations of privacy and anonymity? We welcome papers that investigate any dimension of this phenomenon. Contact: Marc Pugliese - marc.pugliese@saintleo.edu

[Co-Sponsored Panel with Ecclesiastical Investigations and World Christianity on converting to "none" in a transnational context.](#)

The World Christianity, Religious Conversions, and Ecclesiological Investigations units invite papers for a joint session exploring the nature of deconversion interpreted as both turning away and turning towards (i.e. deeper conversion) as an exercise of agency. One important feature of 'deconversion' may be a decision to leave or pull back from active association with a religious institution or a traditional faith community. How does disaffiliation function to critique or challenge religious organizations? What role does the abuse and exercise of power, especially institutional power, play in the process of deconversion? How might one consider the distinction between rejecting an institution and relinquishing a religious identity altogether?

Likewise, alternative sources of community, solidarity, and spiritual meaning may be significant pull factors that facilitate religious change. Where are people going and why are they drawn there? Following deconversion, in what ways, if any, do religious traditions still shape an individual's idea of "authentic community"? This panel seeks papers that advance our understanding of what changes and what remains the same, or even intensifies, when people find the freedom to redefine their religious belonging and turn to spiritual practices they experience as more lifegiving?

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)

Anonymity: Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection

Method of submission: PAPERS

Leadership:

Unit Co-Chair – Kent, Eliza F., Skidmore College, ekent@skidmore.edu

Unit Co-Chair – Self, Kathleen, St. Lawrence University, kself@stlawu.edu

Chairs

- Eliza Kent, Skidmore College
ekent@skidmore.edu
- Kathleen M. Self, St. Lawrence University
kself@stlawu.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religious Conversions Unit

Call for Proposals

Conversion to Global Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism remains one of the fastest growing religious movements in the world. Locally, its explosive growth (or fears about its explosive growth) often has divisive effects, which generate considerable discourse about conversion. To capitalize on the online format, we invite colleagues from around the world to participate in a panel examining conversion and its side effects, the communities targeted/mobilized by evangelists, political tensions that arise or are exacerbated in the context of Pentecostal evangelization and local theorizing about conversion that Pentecostal growth stimulates. Contact: Eliza Kent - ekent@skidmore.edu

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
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- 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)

Anonymity: Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection

Method of submission: PAPERS

Leadership:

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Unit Co-Chair – Self, Kathleen, St. Lawrence University, kself@stlawu.edu

Chairs

- Eliza Kent, Skidmore College
ekent@skidmore.edu
- Kathleen M. Self, St. Lawrence University
kself@stlawu.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religious Education Association

Call for Proposals

This call seeks to explore the interplay between religious education and freedom. Proposals exploring how religious traditions conceptualize freedom, how these conceptualizations embodied in beliefs, theologies, interpretations, and practices shape the practices of religious education, and the impact of these practices on learners and society, are welcome. In addition, it invites examination of how other disciplines and cultures understand freedom and how these perspectives can inform religious traditions' views on the concept.

Submissions are encouraged to utilize interdisciplinary or interreligious approaches, consider local or global contexts, and engage with various theories and practices within and beyond the field of religious education. Themes such as freedom, conscientization, human rights, diversity, compulsory religious education, and emancipatory pedagogies are welcomed for exploration and discussion.

Possible questions for exploration include, but are not limited to:

- In what ways can religious education enable students to freely discover their own religious identity?
- How can disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and political science contribute to the debate on religious education and freedom?
- How does religious education in faith-based schools align or conflict with students' freedom of religion?

- Can educators' identities or their religious or political stances ever limit or conflict with students' freedom, affecting their pedagogical methods and relationships with students?
- How can religious education address the values of human rights and freedom to promote social peace and equality?
- What do specific religious traditions teach about the value and experience of freedom, and how can these teachings be applied and taught in religious education?
- In what ways does interreligious teaching shape students' understanding of freedom?
- Could we say, what emancipatory pedagogical methods can be employed to promote a creative tension between religious tradition and freedom?

Proposals should include a concise overview of the topic, research question, methodology, potential contribution to the field, and a bibliography.

Our goal is to select 3-4 proposals and allocate approximately 15 minutes for each presentation. After that, we will have time for questions and answers, followed by a brief discussion if possible.

We look forward to receiving thought-provoking and innovative proposals that advance dialogue on freedom within the context of religious education.

Chairs

- Karen-Marie Yust, Union Presbyterian Seminary
kmyust@upsem.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Religious Reflections on Friendship Seminar](#)

Call for Proposals

The Religious Reflections on Friendship seminar unit invites proposals for papers that challenge, enrich, or broaden dominant perceptions of friendship, whether in relation to a specific religious tradition, or to various forms of interreligious engagement. Papers

presented at the seminar will be considered for publication in an edited volume engaging with these themes.

Given the location of the 2025 in-person annual meetings, we welcome papers that acknowledge, honor and promote relational learning from the first peoples of Massachusetts and beyond, and that promote the honoring of covenantal friendship treaties. Additionally, we welcome papers highlighting local initiatives that seek to promote interreligious understanding, engagement, social justice, and friendship.

Considering 2025's presidential theme of *freedom*, we specifically invite papers that consider ways in which friendship—personal, and/or civic—can foster non-violent resistance to oppression, peace-making, healing from trauma, and community building, in the pursuit of freedom. Possible themes include:

- Friendship, Freedom, and Nonviolent Resistance to Oppression
- Friendship Treaties & Ecological Guardianship
- Friendship-Informed Activism
- Grassroot Freedom Movements
- Friendship, Peacebuilding, and Politics

Additionally, we welcome papers that:

- demonstrate ways in which willing good for one's friend(s), and being active on their behalf— despite division, conflict, and polarization—spills over into public, political, and ecological action, seeking good not only for the friend, but for their broader community.
- explore the notion of friendship across various types of boundaries and power differentials
- address the intersection of friendship studies, religious studies, and/or peace studies from any scholarly perspective and religious tradition(s).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Seminar is to provide a broad forum in which the important but under-researched relationship of friendship can be studied, discussed, challenged, and ultimately enriched from a variety of religious perspectives. Friendship has personal, public, and political dimensions, and—from an Indigenous perspective— extends to ecological interconnectedness and is not exclusive of kinship relationships. In times characterized by division, conflict, and various forms of othering, we assert that friendship studies contribute towards furthering intercultural and 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 perspectives.

Chairs

- Anne-Marie Ellithorpe
aellithorpe@vst.edu
- Hussam S. Timani
hussam.timani@cnu.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Religious Reflections on Friendship Seminar

Call for Proposals

The virtual session of the Religious Reflections on Friendship seminar unit invites proposals for papers and presentations that challenge, enrich, or broaden dominant perceptions of friendship, whether in relation to (1) a specific religious tradition, (2) various forms of interreligious engagement, (3) civic practice characterized by global awareness and local engagement, or (4) interdisciplinary engagement between friendship studies, interreligious studies, and other relational disciplines. This session welcomes short presentations that will serve as launching points for a broader group discussion as well as conventional paper presentations.

Considering 2025's presidential theme of *freedom*, we specifically invite papers and presentations that consider ways in which friendship—personal, and/or civic—can foster non-violent resistance to oppression, personal and community healing, and peace-making, in the pursuit of freedom.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Seminar is to provide a broad forum in which the important but under-researched relationship of friendship can be studied, discussed, challenged, and ultimately enriched from a variety of religious perspectives. Friendship has personal, public, and political dimensions, and—from an Indigenous perspective— extends to ecological interconnectedness and is not exclusive of kinship relationships. In times characterized by division, conflict, and various forms of othering, we assert that friendship studies contribute towards furthering intercultural and 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.

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Chairs

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aellithorpe@vst.edu
- Hussam S. Timani
hussam.timani@cnu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Ritual Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

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. This year, in keeping with the AAR's presidential theme of Freedom, we want to explore more deeply what it

means to hold, exert, or change the structure of power in ritual contexts. 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:

- How Freedom Is Imagined in Ritual Contexts (rituals of liberation, freedom from demonic influences, financial liberty, etc.)
- Ritual Suppression (banned, disallowed, minimized)
- Bespoke Rituals (new, innovative rituals created by religious communities or leaders to fill a specific need)
- [Technology and Ritual \(for a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion, Media, and Culture Unit\)](#): We invite proposals that investigate the use of technology, automation, or artificial intelligence in religious ritual or ceremony. Examples could include a robotic arm performing aarti in India, electric wheelchairs made available to the elderly or disabled in Mecca, or Mindar, an AI-robot priest in Japan. This session also welcomes discussions of aniconism and/or technophobia across religious and world traditions.
- [Ritual and Large Events \(for a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion and Popular Culture Unit\)](#): We invite proposals that examine the role of ritual in events that draw large crowds, such as concerts, sporting events, conferences, political rallies, and protests.
- [The Sociology of Ritual \(for a possible co-sponsored session with the Sociology of Religion Unit\)](#): We invite proposals that examine sociological approaches to ritual. Examples could include reassessments of major theorists, like Émile Durkheim, Clifford Geertz, or Catherine Bell; original studies of religious, spiritual, or secular rituals across a variety of contexts; or other topics related to the sociological study of ritual.

Whenever possible, our sessions will be formatted to encourage interaction and group discussion on the basis of concise, pre-circulated papers of approximately five pages submitted for circulation by October 15, 2025. 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.

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

- Courtney Applewhite, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)
courtney.applewhite@epfl.ch
- Joy Palacios
joypalacios@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit

Call for Proposals

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

- Raissa Von Doetinchem De Rande, Rhodes College
rrande@princeton.edu
- R. Brian Siebeking, Gonzaga University
siebeking@gonzaga.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction Unit

Call for Proposals

For 2025, the unit Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction (STTTC) will be offering two themed panels and one “open” session. The first themed panel will be an invited panel of scholars responding to the recently published book by Robert Paul Seesengood, *American Standard: The Bible in U.S. Popular Culture* (Wiley 2024). This session is closed to submission.

The second themed panel is a joint session with the SBL Religion, Theory, and the Bible section to co-sponsor a panel titled “Theoretically Animals,” which will explore animal studies and/in sacred texts but with a particular focus on theory. This panel is seeking work that engages with Animals and/in Sacred Texts, but does so via strong engagement with sharply informed critical theory—including but also going well beyond Agamben, Calarco, Derrida, Haraway, and others—in an effort to address “what is ‘the Animal’”. This panel will feature a combination of “open” applicants from both SBL and AAR memberships as well as some solicited works.

For the “open” session, we invite the submission of any papers (or even entire panels) which resonate with the general interests and mandate of STTTC. As always, STTTC is keenly interested in presenting innovative and exploratory work that engages with Critical Theory (broadly defined), Cultural Studies, and Continental Philosophy intersecting with either Sacred Texts (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

- Ludwig Noya
ludwig.noya@vanderbilt.edu
- Robert Seesengood, Albright College
rseesengood@albright.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Schleiermacher Unit

Call for Proposals

Schleiermacher as Innovator: New Horizons for Research

Recent scholarship on Schleiermacher has increasingly moved away from the earlier one-sided caricatures of his thought to recover the central significance of Schleiermacher's writings in shaping the modern study of religion, philosophy, and the humanities. The newly published volume *The Oxford Handbook of Friedrich Schleiermacher* (2023) reflects this wide-ranging influence of Schleiermacher's thought and highlights the ongoing importance and constructive promise of Schleiermacher's writings in the contemporary study of religion, theology, and philosophy.

This session encourages papers or panels that engage this *Handbook* or the various themes treated within it, including: influences on Schleiermacher and his engagement with contemporaries; Schleiermacher's innovative treatment of various university

disciplines, such as dialectic, hermeneutics, pedagogy, or psychology; Schleiermacher's innovative vision of theological study and creative recasting of traditional theological themes; and the ongoing constructive significance of Schleiermacher's work. We especially encourage proposals that point to new avenues of research or interpretation, or which highlight original research into Schleiermacher's thought.

[Co-sponsored with the Christian Systematic Theology Unit and the Reformed Theology and History Unit](#)

Though freedom has long been a focus of Christian theological reflection, it has gained urgency in contemporary theologies such as liberationist, emancipatory, and other perspectives. Reflecting on the AAR's 2025 presidential theme of freedom, we invite proposals that engage its theological developments broadly, as well as proposals that address concept of freedom in Friedrich Schleiermacher's work. Subtopics may include:

- sin, individual and social, as bondage/un-freedom
- redemption (*Erlösung*) as freedom or liberation from bondage
- human freedom as communal and individual
- religious freedom and pluralistic society
- freedom and religious communication in Schleiermacher's *Speeches and Soliloquies*
- freedom/dependence, activity/receptivity, and redemption in Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*
- human freedom and divine election; are human beings free to say no to God?

["Is there such a thing as a Christian Nation?" Cultural Christianity and Historical Progress](#)

[\(Co-sponsored by the Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Unit\)](#)

The idea of "cultural Christianity" as a social good has seen a resurgence among contemporary nationalists who see the active promotion of Christian culture or society as an important aspect of social progress. This notion of a culturally normative Christianity, together with the idea of Christian society in advancing historical progress, also plays a prominent role in the works of both Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Schleiermacher. Kierkegaard's penetrating criticism of cultural Christianity aims to reintroduce Christianity into Christendom and nominally Christian society. And while

Schleiermacher is often described as founding the cultural Protestantism (*Kulturprotestantismus*) that dominated late nineteenth-century theology, his own writings recognize the inescapable tensions and dangers in the concept of the modern Christian nation-state.

This session calls for proposals, for individual papers or panels, that engage these complex themes in the writings of Kierkegaard and/or Schleiermacher. Topics for proposals might include (but are not limited to) the following:

- The notion of historical progress in the writings of Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher
- The theme of 'Christian society' in the work of Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher
- The role of subjectivity in the life of faith
- Kierkegaard's critique of 'Christendom'
- Schleiermacher on the 'Christian state'
- The influence of Luther on Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher in their responses to questions of church, society, and state
- Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher on Hegel's treatment of religion and the Christian state
- Cultural Protestantism and the comparative study of religion
- Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard as resources for critiquing contemporary expressions of cultural Christianity and Christian nationalism

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.

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

- Calli Micale
calli.micale@yale.edu
- Kevin Vander Schel
vanderschel@gonzaga.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Schleiermacher Unit

Call for Proposals

Worship as Social Resistance

For this virtual session, we invite papers that explore the function of worship and liturgy in times of political unrest and uncertainty, especially as a source of resistance. We encourage both proposals that broadly consider the foundational role of worship in the face of political crisis, and also proposals that more specifically consider the place of worship in Schleiermacher's thought and in the social unrest following the French Revolution (for example, in his sermons, *Christian Faith*, Christian ethics, or practical theology).

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

- Calli Micale
calli.micale@yale.edu
- Kevin Vander Schel
vanderschel@gonzaga.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Science, Technology, and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

The Science, Technology and Religion Unit is soliciting proposals on the following topics:

- Space exploration, space programs, and religion.
- For the centennial of the 1925 Scopes Trial: the relevance of the Scopes Trial to contemporary issues (education, secularism, eugenics, etc.).
- Political philosophy/political theology and science and religion, especially as they relate to law, power, policy, and the 2025 presidential theme of "Freedom."
- Public scholarship/science communication and the study of science and religion.
- Reproduction, reproductive healthcare, and reproductive technologies and religion.
- Engaged Buddhism and science.
- Religion and climate change.
- Hindu nationalism and science.
- [*For a possible cosponsored session with the Religion in Europe Unit: religious considerations related to the development of AI in Europe.*](#)
- STR also welcomes other proposals for individual papers and panels that fall under the purview of science and religion, broadly understood.

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

- Donovan Schaefer
doschaef@upenn.edu

- Myrna Sheldon
sheldonm@ohio.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Science, Technology, and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

We welcome proposals for individual papers and panels that fall under the purview of science and religion, broadly understood. Proposals corresponding to our fall CFP are also welcome.

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

- Donovan Schaefer
doschaef@upenn.edu
- Myrna Sheldon
sheldonm@ohio.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Scriptural Reasoning Unit

Call for Proposals

For the 2025 meeting, the Scriptural Reasoning Unit will host two sessions. The first session will be an open call for proposals on the topic of "Prophecy and Adoption." Religious discourse on adoption in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam often draws on the prophetic texts of these respective traditions to talk about the ethical calls to care for orphans, metaphors of divine adoption and the prophetic capacities and callings of adopted children in these traditions. With increased attention to adoption's traumatic dimensions and the risks of cultural erasure, a close examination of the significance and place of adoption in religious practice is warranted. The second will be a Scriptural Reasoning Session on the theme of "Debt and Freedom" with invited presentations.

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

- Essam Fahim
essam.fahim@lums.edu.pk
- Kelly Figueroa-Ray, Hamline University
kfigueroaray01@hamline.edu

Secularism and Secularity Unit

Call for Proposals

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. All proposals related to secularism and secularity will be considered. In addition, we especially welcome proposals on the following topics:

Secularism Studies in a Fractured Age: Where Do We Go from Here?

Following the re-election of Donald Trump in 2024 and a renewed consolidation of white Christian nationalism in the United States more generally, we invite proposals that inquire into how the academic study of secularism and secularity should respond to our current political moment. We especially welcome topics exploring how the field may offer unique insights into contemporary American life, the role secularist logics may have played in producing our current moment, or the possibilities and limitations of secularism as a framework for bolstering critical intellectual resistance to theologically-inflected authoritarian politics.

Is “Freedom” a Secular Category? (Co-Sponsored with the Colonialism and Postcolonialism Unit)

Drawing from the 2025 AAR presidential theme of “freedom,” we invite proposals that seek to critically interrogate how the very concept of “freedom” has been theorized, valued, and enacted within the organizing logics of Western secularism. Though recent scholarship has inquired into the Christian theological underpinnings of the category within Western thought and the mobilization of “freedom” rhetoric within and through projects of colonialism and empire-building, less focus has been placed on how “freedom” is conceptualized and articulated within modern political discourse. Especially amid the intense political polarization in the contemporary United States, various groups invoke the language of “freedom” to engage concerns of religious liberty, substantive equality, and protections against state action—sometimes to dramatically different ends but often within the same putatively secular registers. We are interested in further showcasing work that strives to better document and analyze this “freedom” discourse. How does “freedom” function as a concept, which transfers theological grammars into political meanings that frame the globalization of western nation-state logics, and ongoing colonial structuration of relations between the so-

called global north and global south? Here, following critiques of feminist studies, queer studies, Black studies and postcolonial studies, how is what is indexed as religion used to mark the gendered, sexed, raced and colonial underside of freedom. What opportunities emerge from this under (or other) side, often called religion, to disrupt, decolonize or dismantle political-theological practices of freedom built on an other?

[Author Meets Respondents: Anthony Petro's *Provoking Religion: Sex, Art, and the Culture Wars* \(Co-Sponsored with the Gay Men and Religion Unit and the Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit\)](#)

This panel celebrates and thinks with Anthony Petro's *Provoking Religion: Sex, Art, and the Culture Wars* (Oxford University Press, 2025). This is a largely pre-arranged author-meets-respondents session, and we are interested in including scholars interested in queer, gay, lesbian, feminist, and trans visual culture, and twentieth-century American religious histories who would like to participate. Please email Siobhan Kelly (siokelly@bu.edu) if you would like to be considered as a panelist.

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

- Eric Stephen
eric_stephen@mail.harvard.edu
- Rafael Vizcaino, DePaul University
r.vizcaino@depaul.edu

Sikh Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The following are proposed panel titles for 2025. 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:

"100 Years of the 1925 Gurdwara Act: A commemoration"

As we approach the centenary of the 1925 Gurdwara Act, we invite reflections on the significance, impact, and legacy of this landmark legislation. The 1925 Gurdwara Act was a pivotal moment in Sikh history, marking the formal recognition and regulation of Sikh Gurdwaras in India. This panel aims to explore the multifaceted dimensions of the Act, its historical context, and its enduring influence on Sikh religious and community life. We welcome submissions that address, but are not limited to, the following themes and topics: a) Historical context and Genesis of the 1925 Gurdwara Act; b) Legal and Political Implications; c) Contemporary Relevance and Challenges.

"Sikh Struggles for Freedom and Human Rights"

We invite papers that delve into the historical context of Sikh struggles for autonomy, the foundations of equality in Sikh teachings, and the impact of national and international laws on Sikh communities. Additionally, we welcome analyses of contemporary issues such as human rights violations, Sikh activism, and the role of Sikh organisations in global advocacy. Contributions may also explore cultural expressions of freedom and human rights in Sikh literature, art, and media, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by Sikh diaspora communities.

["Creative Approaches to Teaching Sikhi through a Decolonial Frame"](#)

Co-sponsored panel with Teaching Religion Unit and Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit

The co-sponsoring units invite scholars, educators, activists, and community leaders to submit papers for a possible co-sponsored panel on "Creative Approaches to Teaching Sikhi through a Decolonial Frame." This panel aims to explore innovative and transformative methods for teaching Sikh history, philosophy, and practices by

challenging colonial narratives and embracing decolonial perspectives. We seek contributions that highlight creative pedagogical strategies, curriculum development, and community engagement that centre Sikh voices and experiences, fostering a more inclusive and accurate understanding of Sikhi. We welcome papers that address, but are not limited to, the following themes and topics: a) Decolonising Sikh History and Narratives, b) Innovative Pedagogical Strategies, c) Curriculum Development, d) Community Engagement and Empowerment.

[Sikh-Hindu Relations in the North America: Contexts and Conflicts](#)

Migration and labor histories, racialization and anticolonial movements, legacies of Partition and 1984, diasporic clashes and interreligious violence—Sikh-Hindu relations in North America are shaped by many contexts and conflicts. The North American Hinduism Unit and the Sikh Studies Unit invite papers that draw on archival, literary, ethnographic, and/or interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Sikh-Hindu relations in North America. Topics might include: 1) histories of migrant labor, racialization, immigration, and citizenship, 2) anticolonial movements, the Ghadar Party, Hindu-Sikh presence in California, 3) Sikh-Hindu religious practices, 4) impact of Partition (1947) and the 1984 Anti-Sikh violence on diasporic relations, 5) political formations and questions of sovereignty in the diaspora, 6) Sikh-Hindu inter-religious conflicts in North America.

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, Sikhism, and Sikhi can be understood and studied in the academy.

Chairs

- Jasjit Singh
j.s.singh@leeds.ac.uk
- Nirinjan Khalsa
nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy](#)

Call for Proposals

The Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy welcomes proposals for our two 90min panels at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting, to be held November 22–25, 2025 at Boston, whose presidential theme is [freedom](#). Proposals regarding any aspect of Asian or comparative philosophy are welcome.

Please submit through AAR PAPERS system. Typically, AAR submission site opens at the end of January, proposals due early to mid-March 2025. You can find instructions here, https://papers.aarweb.org/sites/default/files/general/PAPERS_Instruction...

For AAR 2025, one of our allotted two panels will be co-sponsored with Global-Critical Philosophy of Religion on the following theme.

Title – Translational Feminisms for Philosophers of Religion

CFP description – How might philosophers of religion constructively approach the unresolved, intractable, transcultural issue of patriarchy and gender-based oppression from the theoretical resources of resources typically marginalized by the field? We seek papers and panel proposals that clearly articulate a specific problem, outline arguments in response, and philosophically evaluate the arguments' merits. Our session will thereby produce a mutually illuminating conversation.

Statement of Purpose

The SACP was established in 1967 as a nonprofit organization aimed at advancing the development of the disciplines of Asian and comparative philosophy in the international academic arena, and bringing together Asian and Western philosophers for a mutually

beneficial exchange of ideas. It holds panels in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association, the Association of Asian Studies, and the American Academy of Religion. Annual individual membership dues for the SACP are \$45 (\$30 for students and professors emeriti) and include a subscription to the SACP Forum. The Society also sponsors a monograph series on specialized topics published by the University of Hawai'i Press. For more information about the SACP and about the Journal , Philosophy East and West, please see our website at <http://www.sacpweb.org>.

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts

Call for Proposals

SESSION 1 - OPEN CALL: 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.

SESSION 2 - UNDER ERASURE: SCRIPT invites proposals on aspects of iconic and performative texts in times of censorship or erasure. Examples include but are not limited to the creation of palimpsests, hidden or smuggled books, public acts of removal or destruction, political pressures on authors or users to renounce or disavow texts, and other situations where texts are placed semantically, performatively, or iconically "under erasure."

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@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Sociology of Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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 “Freedom”

- Including the sociology of religion and law, social movements for freedom, religious freedom activism, theocratic and unfreedom movements, and more.

[Sociology of Buddhism \(Co-sponsored with the Buddhism Unit\)](#)

- This possible co-sponsored session invites proposals focused on the sociology of Buddhism, including local or global studies, reflections on the state of the field, and more from scholars working across geographies, traditions, and practices. We seek original research using sociological methodologies, such as quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, historical sociology, and theoretical approaches.

[Sociology of Quakerism \(Co-sponsored with the Quaker Studies Unit\)](#)

- This possible co-sponsored session invites proposals focused on the sociology of Quakerism, including quantitative and qualitative studies across local, national, and global contexts.

[Sociology of Ritual \(Co-sponsored with the Ritual Studies Unit\)](#)

- This possible co-sponsored session invites proposals that examine or employ sociological approaches to ritual. Examples include original studies of religious, spiritual, or secular rituals across a variety of contexts; reassessments of major theorists, like Émile Durkheim, Clifford Geertz, or Catherine Bell; or other topics related to the sociological study of ritual.

Religious Pluralism

- Including research on religious pluralism in societies, organizations, families, and more.

2024 Elections and Religion

- Including sociological research on 2024 elections and religion, including electoral shifts, the fall of incumbent parties and politicians, religio-political movements, and more; we welcome proposals discussing elections in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and North America, including local, national, and transnational perspectives.

Digital Religion

- Including sociological research on digital religion, religion and social media, religion online, online religions, religious media, and more.

Class and Religion

- Including sociological research on religion and economic or social class, stratification, inequality, religio-economic movements, 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 surveys, data and text mining, statistical analyses, geospatial studies, experimental methods, and original mixed-methods research. Results must be complete and analyzed by the time the annual meeting begins.

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.

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
- Dusty Hoesly, University of California, Santa Barbara
hoesly@ucsb.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

South Asian Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Steering Committee of the South Asian Religions (SARI) Unit invites colleagues to submit proposals for the 2025 AAR Annual Meeting in Boston, MA. 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 2025 AAR

Presidential Theme: “Freedom.” For more information on Dr. Leela Prasad’s Presidential Theme please visit: [Freedom](#).

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 2025 Annual Meeting, SARI has a flexible allotment of panel formats: three 2hour sessions and two 90minute 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.

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) and Bhakti Mamtora (mamtora@arizona.edu) for assistance or to email the colleagues listed below if there is a topic that is interesting to you.

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 the DP 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 A. Patel (abp6177@psu.edu) and Aalekhya Malladi (aalekhya.malladi@mcgill.ca) co-convenors

of the panel for 2025 AND upload your individual paper proposal in the AAR's PAPERS system, labeled as a "New Directions" submission.

Merchant Masculinity and Religion – Whitney Kelting (m.kelting@northeastern.edu).

Religion and Food in South Asia – Aarti Patel (abp6177@psu.edu)

[Anthropology of Hinduism: Histories, Possibilities, and Stakes](#) (possible co-sponsorship with Hinduism Unit) – Ridhima Sharma (ridhima.sharma@mail.utoronto.ca)

Religion in Collections - Avni Chag (a.c.chag@vu.nl) and Leah Comeau (lcomeau@sju.edu)

This panel seeks to interrogate and challenge value-laden categories such as public knowledge, heritage building, and cultural preservation in museums and other institutions that hold religious objects from South Asia. We ask of these collections, in what way is meaning conditioned by material assemblages and social infrastructures? Topics might include lives of religious objects, affective impacts of object displays, performances of devotion and expertise, and how both the contemporary lives and histories of objects become rooted with their keepers and curators.

Languages of Freedom and Unfreedom in South Asian Religions – Aniket De (ande@ucsd.edu)

Towards a Comparative Study of Female Devotional Exemplars ("Saints") from South Asia - Karen Pechilis (kpechili@drew.edu)

We seek scholars who have performed detailed study of historical female saints from South Asia, religion location open. Female saints are of enduring interest to scholars, teachers, and students because they are vibrantly related to poetry, song, life story, and the arts and because they direct attention to the analysis of women and gender in the study of religion. This panel seeks to bring together scholars who are performing

detailed study of specific historical female saints in order to leverage that new information to rethink the terms of past comparative analysis and its assumptions about women, gender, and devotion, and to identify its implications for theorizing devotion generally today. The group will together decide what aspect of freedom (the AAR 2025 theme) to emphasize in the comparison.

Translating Across Languages, Genres, and Religion – Aalekhya Malladi
(aalekhya.malladi@mcgill.ca)

Orality and Aurality in South Asian Religions – Maharshi Vyas (myvas@ucsb.edu)

This panel seeks to bring forth innovative ways of theorizing the oral, aural, and sonic dimensions of South Asian religions. Papers may explore the sensory interplay between various forms of sound, speech, and/or the lack thereof, i.e., silence within devotional practices, socio-political contexts, presence in public spaces, the construction of history/memory, etc.

Soteriology in South Asian Religions – Abhishek Ghosh (dharmas@somaiya.edu)

This panel invites papers exploring these soteriological concepts—*moksha*, *nirvana*, *kaivalya*, *mukti*, *apavarga*, and *fanā'*—as diverse expressions of liberation within South Asian religious traditions. This panel aims to foster a comparative dialogue that illuminates the unique and shared understandings of ultimate freedom across Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Sufism.

Political Ideologies of Freedom in Indian Classical Texts – Rodney Sebastian
(rodney.sebastian@gmail.com)

[Lived Experiences of Hindus: Autoethnographic Studies by Scholar-Practitioners across various Hindu Sampradayas and Disciplines](#) (possible co-sponsorship with Hinduism Unit) – Sriram Subramaniam (sriram.subramanian@hua.edu)

What are the lived experiences of a Hindu - rituals, beliefs, prayers, traditions, philosophy, and more? This panel highlights the diverse aspects of the lived experiences of being a Hindu through autoethnographic studies by scholar-practitioners across multiple Hindu Sampradayas. These studies demonstrate how these scholar-practitioners bring their Hindu experiences into their respective disciplines while bringing out the continuity among seemingly different aspects of Hinduism.

Global Hinduism beyond the Anglosphere (possible co-sponsorship with Hinduism Unit and North American Hinduism Unit) – Aditya Bhattacharjee (abhattach@risd.edu)

Exploring Autonomy and Agency in South Asian Religious Traditions - Kalpesh Bhatt (kbhatt@umw.edu)

What does it mean to be free? What truly defines liberty or autonomy? This panel explores the diverse interpretations of autonomy and agency within South Asian religious traditions, including but not limited to Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Islam, and Christianity. We aim to unpack how these traditions understand, shape, and are shaped by the concept of autonomy or freedom. We invite papers that examine autonomy through various methodologies such as textual studies, historical studies, social sciences, and the anthropology of religion.

Roundtable discussion of a recent book:

SherAli Tareen (sherali.tareen@famdm.edu) and Bhakti Mamtora (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 Mamtora, University of Arizona
mamtora@arizona.edu
- SherAli Tareen
stareen@fandm.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Space, Place, and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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:

- [Remember the Struggle: Commemorating Sites of Freedom the World Over](#), Co-sponsored with the Religion and Memory Unit
With the conference's theme being "Freedom," and the conference's location at an epicenter of the American Revolution, we invite papers that explore those spaces and places that commemorate struggles for freedom. Why have some places been preserved? Why have other spaces been forgotten? And what role has religion played in this process? Papers can consider any time, topic, and locale.
- Spatial Overflow- We invite proposals that examine religious practices that spill out of their physical boundaries or spaces that foster the experience of abundant/excessive/transcendent phenomena that overflow our conceptual categories.
- Counter-hegemonic theories of religion and space- papers that consider counter-hegemonic conceptions of space and place, and we are particularly interested in submissions that focus on haunting as a counter-hegemonic narration of space.
- Religious place and health- how does access to health intersect with religious identity?
- Methods of map-making- how does the researcher visualize their field of study? Possible co-sponsorship with Religion, Media, and Culture Unit

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

- Courtney Bruntz
courtney.bruntz@doane.edu
- Katie Oxx, Saint Joseph's University
koxx@sju.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Special Session

Call for Proposals

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 3, 2025. 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.

Chairs

- Amy Defibaugh
adeibaugh@aarweb.org
- Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida
ann.gleig@ucf.edu
- Claudia Schippert
claudiaschippert@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Special Session

Call for Proposals

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 3, 2025. 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.

Chairs

- Amy Defibaugh
adefibaugh@aarweb.org
- Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida
ann.gleig@ucf.edu
- Claudia Schippert
claudiaschippert@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Study of Islam Unit

Call for Proposals

This Unit encourages 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. In addition to individual paper proposals, we especially encourage the submission of coherent pre-arranged sessions involving multiple scholars, including traditional paper panels, roundtable or lightning sessions, or other creative presentation formats. We also encourage proposals with attention to classroom and public pedagogies.

It is an explicit requirement of our Unit for pre-arranged panels to incorporate diversity along the lines of gender, race, institutional context, and rank.

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.

In relation to the 2025 presidential theme on freedom, we are especially interested in proposals on:

- Palestine and Palestinian liberation: We are interested in a wide array of topics and approaches to this timely subject, whether contemporary debates over academic freedom and journalism, ethics and activism, history and political theology, etc. We are looking specifically for proposals that demonstrate how an Islamic studies perspective adds to our understanding of historic and contemporary Palestine.
- Reflections on the entanglements of research, teaching, public scholarship, and activism. We are particularly envisioning a session that might bring together Islamic studies scholars with (non-academic) community-based leaders and activists. We envision rich dialogues that put these different levels of expertise and experience in conversation with each other. (If your proposal is accepted, we will work with the AAR to facilitate the attendance of non-academic participants.)
- The life and legacies of Malcolm X, in light of the 100th anniversary of his birth year.
- Muslim legacies in/of Boston
- Reproductive rights and abortion
- Climate change, environmentalism, and the anthropocene
- [Teaching-specific readings on women and gender in Islamic Studies in the undergraduate classroom \(co-sponsored session with the Islam, Gender, Women program unit\)](#)
 - For this session, we envision the presentation of a specific reading assignment (chapter or journal article length) that contributes to teaching gender in Islamic studies. We invite proposals that explain how the instructor has taught/is teaching a particular reading and what kind of assignment accompanies that reading. How does the assignment pedagogically enhance both the reading material assigned and the study of gender? Put another way, why this reading and why this assignment? How do they help an undergraduate better understand the issues surrounding gender and Islamic studies? In the proposal, please indicate

the full citation of the reading and explain why you are interested in sharing it with others at the AAR.

- 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.
- As always, we encourage submissions on topics of general interest, such as the Qur'an and hadith, Islamic law and ethics, philosophy and theology, mysticism, ritual, gender and sexuality, race and politics, 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

- Samah Choudhury, Ithaca College
schoudhury@ithaca.edu
- Zaid Adhami
za2@williams.edu

Tantric Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

We invite papers on the following topics:

- Subaltern Tantra, Jason Schwartz, khecara36@gmail.com
- Conceptualizing Tantric Experience, Eileen Goddard, eileengoddard@umail.ucsb.edu
- Tantric Objects and Tantric Subjects, Sundari Johansen, sjohansen@ciis.edu
- Tantra in Southeast and East Asia, Patricia Sauthoff, sauthoff@gmail.com
- Tantra and Politics, Jason Schwartz, khecara36@gmail.com
- Tantra and the Cognitive Science of Religion, Igor Kokhan, ikokhan@lasierra.edu
- Canonizing Transgression: The Conversion of Tantric Heresies into Orthodoxies, Patrick Lambelet, p.lambelet@maitripa.org
- Excerpt of a Tantric Text in Translation, with Group Analysis, Sthaneshwar Timalsina, sthaneshwar.timalsina@stonybrook.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
agolovkova@lakeforest.edu
- Shaman Hatley, University of Massachusetts, Boston
shaman.hatley@umb.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Teaching against Islamophobia Seminar](#)

Call for Proposals

No call issued.

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
sajidajalalzai@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Teaching Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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. We invite both individual paper proposals as well as proposals for fully-developed roundtables or sessions. For 2025, paper and panel proposals that address the following themes are especially welcome:

“Teaching Religion and Genocide in the Current Era”

Co-sponsored with the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit, we seek proposals for a session that addresses the challenges associated with teaching religion and genocide in the current political climate. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- diverging scholarly, political, and popular uses of the term “genocide” (as applicable in the classroom);
- teaching genocide in politically polarized classrooms;
- the challenges and opportunities of teaching genocide prevention in partnership with community organizations or nonprofits.

“Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression in the Religious Studies Classroom”

For a possible co-sponsorship with the Religion and Human Rights Program Unit and the Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit, we invite papers that explore the topic of “academic freedom and freedom of expression.” For this co-sponsorship, proposals that are grounded in scholarship of teaching and learning are particularly desired. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- the relationship between an instructor’s academic freedom and their teaching obligations;
- strategies for utilizing religious studies materials for teaching about contentious topics;
- strategies for supporting the academic freedom and free speech rights of students;
- explorations of attacks on academic freedom at the hands of political administrations;
- academic freedom and campus protest.

“Digital Games/Gaming in the Religious Studies Classroom”

The Religion, Media, and Culture Unit and Teaching Religion Unit welcome presentations on and/or demonstrations of innovative teaching methods and styles using various digital platforms with a particular focus on games/gaming in the religious studies classroom. We hope to facilitate discussions that evaluate any obstacles that arise when teaching said media in the classroom. Potential concerns include accessibility in terms of cost, skill, and socialization; relevancy and/or triviality; assignment of relevant scholarship; and evaluation of experiential learning. What new possibilities, for instance, are presented in the study and teaching of games in religious studies? How do we begin to recognize “religion” or the “religious” imaginary in games and other media?

"Creative Approaches to Teaching Sikhi through a Decolonial Frame"

The Sikh Studies Unit, Teaching Religion Unit, and Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit invite scholars, educators, activists, and community leaders to submit papers for a possible co-sponsored panel on "Creative Approaches to Teaching Sikhi through a Decolonial Frame." This panel aims to explore innovative and transformative methods for teaching Sikh history, philosophy, and practices by challenging colonial narratives and embracing decolonial perspectives. We seek contributions that highlight creative pedagogical strategies, curriculum development, and community engagement that centre Sikh voices and experiences, fostering a more inclusive and accurate understanding of Sikhi. We welcome papers that address, but are not limited to, the following themes and topics: a) Decolonising Sikh History and Narratives, b) Innovative Pedagogical Strategies, c) Curriculum Development, d) Community Engagement and Empowerment.

"Teaching Tactics"

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.

General 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 new models for co-teaching across disciplines. Preference will be given to presentation formats that model engaged, interactive, and experiential pedagogy.

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

- Joseph Tucker Edmonds, Indiana University - Purdue University, Indianapolis
jtuckere@iupui.edu
- Kate Gibeault, Keene State College
kydeconinck@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Teaching Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

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. We invite both individual paper proposals as well as proposals for fully-developed roundtables or sessions.

For the June Online Meeting, 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 new models for co-teaching across disciplines. Preference will be given to presentation formats that model engaged, interactive, and experiential pedagogy.

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

- Joseph Tucker Edmonds, Indiana University - Purdue University, Indianapolis
jtuckere@iupui.edu

- Kate Gibeault, Keene State College
kydeconinck@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Theological, Pedagogical, and Ethical Approaches to Israel/Palestine Seminar](#)

Call for Proposals

We are looking for papers on the following topics that examine pedagogical and ethical approaches:

- Art as public pedagogy in Palestinian resistance
- Ethical and Religious Perspectives on Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction
- Interrogating Settler Antisemitism and the Question of Genocide
- Global Holocaust Memory/Global Nakba Memory
- The Palestine Exception: Academic Limits to Censorship and Free Speech
- Remember Amalek: Weaponizing Religion, Critical Perspectives on Israel/Palestine
- 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

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

peaceful 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

- Jason Springs
jspring1@nd.edu
- Rebecca Alpert
ralpert@temple.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

[Theological, Pedagogical, and Ethical Approaches to Israel/Palestine Seminar](#)

Call for Proposals

Christian Zionism: Global Perspectives

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

- Jason Springs
jspring1@nd.edu
- Rebecca Alpert
ralpert@temple.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit

Call for Proposals

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:

- Phantasmatic beings and political theology: papers on angels, fairies, cyborgs, and related figures and their import for political thinking.

- Recent work in trans philosophy and study of religion, especially as related to theorization of bodies and contemporary politics.
- Book panel on Basit Kareem Iqbal's forthcoming *The Dead Heights: Tribulation and Refuge after the Syrian Revolution* (Fordham, 2025).
- Fascism and religion: papers on the relationship between theology and continental philosophy in relation to the global resurgence of fascism and fascist thought. Papers could focus on Christian nationalism and other religiously-based nationalisms, new intellectual fascist figures behind the politicians (Dugin, Vermeule, etc.).
- The legacy of François Laruelle for philosophy of religion and theology.

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

- Anthony Paul Smith, La Salle University
anthonypaul.smith@gmail.com
- Marika Rose, University of Winchester
marika.rose@winchester.ac.uk

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit

Call for Proposals

Same as November call.

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

- Anthony Paul Smith, La Salle University
anthonypaul.smith@gmail.com
- Marika Rose, University of Winchester
marika.rose@winchester.ac.uk

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Theology and Religious Reflection Unit

Call for Proposals

No call issued.

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
abdulrahman.mustafa@googlemail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Theology of Martin Luther King Jr. Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

New Mappings in King Studies – Open Call (90 minutes)

With current and coming shifts in technology, human relationship, notions of leadership, and national and global politics, the Theology of Martin Luther King Jr. Unit invites proposals for an open call for papers and panels focused specifically on charting new directions and possibilities in King scholarship. We are interested in compelling papers or panels that draw upon sources in religion and theological studies, as well as those beyond religion (i.e., law, Black studies, sociology, philosophy, ethics) to identify the potential significance of Kingian theology and broader King studies in the near and longer-term future. Below are some questions to consider in order to display that this is an open call, and we are open to papers from a broad range of foci, disciplines, and methodologies.

- In his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” King wrote, “We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” How might religious communities lean on King as a critical resource for constructing theologies and practices of freedom?
- How might the theological insights, practices, and commitments of figures who influenced King, the SCLC, and the broader civil rights movement point to new and necessary directions in Kingian theological discourse? Some examples could be Ella Baker, Septima Clark, Dorothy Cotton, Bayard Rustin, and Thich Nhat Han.
- How can Kingian theological and philosophical concepts help name what it means to be human amidst the growing realities of artificial intelligence and other technological developments (humanoid bots, privatized space travel, etc.)?
- How might discourse in Black studies identify important interlocutors, generate helpful language, and chart new directions in Kingian theology? How might Kingian theological discourse contribute to Black studies?

- How might we understand, reflect on, problematize, or constructively engage the history and impact of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as we are living in its 60th anniversary?

Author Meets Interlocutors (90 minutes)

Maurice O. Wallace, *King's Vibrato: Modernism, Blackness, and the Sonic Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Duke University Press, 2022

This panel considers the pathbreaking and theoretically rich manuscript, *King's Vibrato: Modernism, Blackness, and the Sonic Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, authored by Maurice O. Wallace. Panelists will consider key themes from the text, including architecture, acoustics, sound, and technology, and the ways in which such categories permit a larger discussion on Martin Luther King, Jr. through the lens of a Black feminist critique.

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
leonardm@illinois.edu
- Montague Williams
montaguewilliams@pointloma.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit

Call for Proposals

We are looking forward to another year of excellent THRU programming in 2025 in Boston!

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 the Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit. The presidential theme for 2025, suggested by incoming president Leela Prasad, is "Freedom." Proposals do not need to relate to the presidential theme but we encourage you to read Prasad's summary of the theme, and to engage with it if it speaks to you.

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.

- Roundtable: Privilege and Positionality across Fieldwork Experience and Interpretation of Texts
 - Contact: Natasha Mikles (n.mikles@txstate.edu),
- Technologies of Governance in Tibet and the Himalayas
 - Thinking with the 2025 theme of 'freedom', this panel invites papers on developments in the ways religion factors into the governance of bodies and minds in Tibet and the Himalayas. Relevant topics include but are not limited to: material culture in governmental technology; the monastery as governing institution; theories of governance in Buddhist and/or Bönpo philosophy; gender and the gendered body as sites of bondage, freedom, and governance; shifting views of the dharmarāja in the Buddhist state; the conflux of political and soteriological liberation. Contact: Seth Auster-Rosen (sethausterrosen@uchicago.edu)

- [Roundtable: New Frontiers of Buddhism: Challenging Norms and Opening Doors \(Potential co-sponsorship with the Buddhism Unit\)](#)
 - This roundtable discussion invites scholars in Buddhist Studies to explore areas of rapid transformation as Buddhism intersects with newly emerging practices and phenomena, such as online religion and developments in contemporary science. These and similar developments challenge the traditional norms of Buddhism long dominated by institutional, textual, and ritual frameworks and transcend conventional boundaries. Such interdisciplinary engagements create new opportunities for Buddhism to directly impact modern scientific and secular practices. We will examine the evolving frontiers of Buddhism, both by challenging established norms and by opening new doors for innovation and collaboration in a global context. Contact: Dhondup T. Rekjong, dhonduptashi2025@u.northwestern.edu
- [Liberation Narratives in Tibetan Buddhism and Speculative Fiction \(Potential co-sponsorship with the Religion and Science Fiction Unit\)](#)
 - We are looking for papers that pair a Tibetan/Himalayan Buddhist narrative source of any genre with a piece of speculative fiction to explore one of the following thematic binaries: freedom/oppression, imagination/reality, enlightenment/delusion, birth/death, or humanity/other sentience. The focus is on the ways that liberation narratives in both Tibetan/Himalayan Buddhism and speculative fiction may serve as mutually enriching heuristic devices for deepening interpretation and understanding. Contact: Joie Szu-Chiao Chen (chens@g.harvard.edu) and Seth Auster-Rosen (sethausterrosen@uchicago.edu)

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
brandon.dotson@wolfson.oxon.org
- Jue Liang, Case Western Reserve University
jl4nf@virginia.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

[Co-Sponsored Session with AAR Platonism and Neoplatonism Program Unit](#)

For a session co-sponsored with the AAR Platonism and Neoplatonism program unit, we are interested in proposals related to the reception of Plato and the Platonic tradition in the context of the religious traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity, including Jewish, Christian, and early Islamic voices in that time and place as well as proposals that take comparative approaches to these traditions and contexts.

Enslavement and Forced Labor in Eastern Late Antiquity

In connection to the 2025 presidential theme “freedom,” we invite paper proposals that explore enslavement, forced labor, and incarceration in the religious traditions of eastern late antiquity. Paper proposals might address these themes from theological perspectives, consider the role of race, gender, and ethnicity, and/or touch upon resistance, agency, and personhood in relation to enslavement.

Book Review Panel (invited), reviews of recent books on Mandaeanism by Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, Edmondo Lupieri, and Sandra van Rompaey

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 Mandaeanism. 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, Indiana University, Bloomington
alkulisz@iu.edu
- James McGrath, Butler University
jfmccgrat@butler.edu

[Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

Weaponizing Freedom in Education: Department of Education and Freedom

While the pursuit of freedom has long been central to liberative pedagogy, in recent years “freedom of education” has been used quite differently to justify attacks on public schools, universities, and even the Department of Education. Though political disputes over the meaning of freedom are not new, these current developments leave scholars of religion in a challenging position when they invoke “freedom” as an aim in their teaching. How might educators in religion respond to and perhaps even seize new transformative opportunities that may emerge in a new future with fewer institutional protections and restrictions? Given transformative pedagogy’s long-standing critiques of the neoliberalization of higher education, are there any benefits or alliances to be made with movements that have weaponized discourse on freedom to “revolutionize” education?

Combahee River Collective: Continuing Influences

It has been just over fifty years since the Combahee River Collective formed in Boston and began work that would become foundational to the development of Black Feminism in the United States. We invite proposals for papers or panels that honor and critically engage the legacy of the Collective in terms of its influence on pedagogy. Successful proposals may reflect on the Collective’s own methods for developing its Combahee River Collective Statement, on the forms of liberative pedagogy enabled by the frameworks put forward in the Statement, or on critical pedagogical issues prompted by the Statement or its contemporary reception. Successful proposals may also offer functional examples of pedagogies inspired by the work of the Collective or argue for new pedagogical developments in the tradition of the Collective that are needed to meet today’s political and educational climate.

Beyond Trigger Warnings: New Frontiers in Pedagogy around Sexual Violence

Often, discussions of teaching with respect to sexual violence center around processes of developing empathy with and care for survivors; and/or methods for teaching direct narratives of rape (e.g., in the Bible or in history). While these are important, we are interested in highlighting pedagogical developments that broaden and deepen what it means to teach around sexual violence. For example, what does it look like to treat sexual violence as a positional point of departure for teaching on broader forms of exploitation and harm? How can sexual violence be used as a critical lens for investigating phenomena not immediately associated with itself? What pedagogical tools rise from the study of sexual violence that are applicable to subfields in the study of religion often excluded from discourse on sexual violence?

[CO-SPONSORED WITH SIKH STUDIES UNIT AND TEACHING RELIGION UNIT:](#)

[Creative Approaches to Teaching Sikhi through a Decolonial Frame](#)

The Sikh Studies Unit, Teaching Religion Unit, and Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit invite scholars, educators, activists, and community leaders to submit papers for a possible co-sponsored panel on "Creative Approaches to Teaching Sikhi through a Decolonial Frame." This panel aims to explore innovative and transformative methods for teaching Sikh history, philosophy, and practices by challenging colonial narratives and embracing decolonial perspectives. We seek contributions that highlight creative pedagogical strategies, curriculum development, and community engagement that centre Sikh voices and experiences, fostering a more inclusive and accurate understanding of Sikhi. We welcome papers that address, but are not limited to, the following themes and topics: a) Decolonising Sikh History and Narratives, b) Innovative Pedagogical Strategies, c) Curriculum Development, d) Community Engagement and Empowerment.

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

- Hilary Scarsella, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School
Hscarsella@crcds.edu
- Peter Capretto, Phillips Theological Seminary
peter.capretto@ptstulsa.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Vatican II Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

The Role of the Theologian at the Council and in a Synodal Church

The Second Vatican Council was not only a meeting of the world's bishops but also a gathering of theologians. After nearly fifty years of theological renewal, theologians such as Henri de Lubac, John Courtney Murray, Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, Gregory Baum, and Hans Küng gave almost daily lectures in their national groups, greatly influencing the council's direction and teachings. Following the council, however, the relationship between theologians and bishops remains ambiguous. While the International Theological Commission was established in 1967 to advise the church's magisterium, a series of investigations were also conducted against theologians like Leonardo Boff, Elizabeth Johnson, and Jacques Dupuis. What can be learned from the period leading up to, during, and after the council regarding the role of a theologian, especially the emergence of lay theologians, in relation to academic theology and church life? If Pope Francis's vision of synodality is deeply rooted in the Council, then what is the role of the theologian in a synodal church? How might Pope Francis's recent 2023 *motu proprio Ad Theologiam Promovendam* reflect the different paradigms and schools of thought at work in a global church?

The Conciliar Legacy of Freedom

Sixty years ago, *Gaudium et Spes* and *Dignitatis Humanae* emerged as pivotal Vatican II documents, addressing the Catholic Church's understanding and commitment to freedom. In the changing context of the long 1960s, with its shifting socio-political

dynamics, the concept of freedom was reframed as both a theological and social imperative, influencing how Catholics engage with personal liberty, human rights, religious freedom, and the interaction between religion and state. This panel invites papers exploring the conciliar legacy of freedom, including historical expressions in the reception of the Council and its evolving conceptualization, by addressing questions such as: How did the concept shape discussions on human autonomy and the Church's engagement with modernity? In what ways did it influence or continue to influence theological and political responses to the tensions between authoritarianism and revolution? How do rejecting and overextending freedoms shape and navigate the council's legacy, both past and present? How have receptions and interpretations of conciliar freedom impacted debates on personal and collective rights, as well as inspire concrete action for social justice?

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 on 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
dries.bosschaert@kuleuven.be
- Jaisy Joseph, Villanova University
jaisy.joseph@villanova.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Vernacular Landscapes and Global Dialogues: Understanding Buddhist Monasticism Seminar

Call for Proposals

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.

One of our theme for the 2025 Annual Meeting is "Social Dimensions of Monastic Education." We would also like to see proposals addressing the theme of Buddhist monasticism, violence, and abuse.

Below are the calls and ideas we have received so far:

- Monastic Lineages: Rebirth, Karma, and Succession (Contact: Nicole Willock, nwillock@odu.edu): Invites participants on a roundtable with pre-circulated short research papers to explore how succession works in different monastic institutions across varying Buddhist traditions in modern and contemporary period (from 19th century to now) with particular attention to the role of karma and rebirth, or the lack thereof.
- Monastic Rituals in Education, Rohit Singh (singhr@denison.edu)
- The Social Dimensions of Monastic Curriculums: This panel will not only compare different Buddhist monastic curriculums themselves, but also the social effects of how monastic programs, curriculums, and institutions are structured. This topic is deliberately broad; please email Andrew Taylor (ataylor9@css.edu) to discuss how we can make our proposal fit your research
- Films and documentaries centering on monasticism

We particularly invite early-career scholars and scholars from underrepresented groups to apply.

Statement of Purpose

This five-year seminar brings together the rich threads of Buddhist monasticism, especially the current changes found in Buddhist monastic communities throughout the world, to rethink scholarly definitions of Buddhism from the perspective of how it is defined, envisioned, and practiced within Buddhist monasteries. While we would welcome scholars who study the history of Buddhist monasticism, we aim to explore what Buddhist monasticism looks like today. Bringing together scholars from diverse disciplines and backgrounds, with localized expertise in Buddhist traditions, the seminar contributes to a holistic theoretical understanding of Buddhist monasticism as an embodied system of religious ideals, as well as a new vision of teaching Buddhism in the classroom.

Chairs

- Jue Liang, Case Western Reserve University
jl4nf@virginia.edu
- Manuel Lopez, New College of Florida
mlopezzafra@ncf.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Vernacular Landscapes and Global Dialogues: Understanding Buddhist Monasticism Seminar

Call for Proposals

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Chairs

- Jue Liang, Case Western Reserve University
jl4nf@virginia.edu
- Manuel Lopez, New College of Florida
mlopezzafra@ncf.edu

Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit

Call for Proposals

Revisiting Personalism: In Boston and Beyond

In 2025, the Annual Meeting returns to Boston, approximately 150 years after Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910) returned to the U.S. from his European studies at Paris, Halle, and Göttingen, where he was deeply influenced by Hermann Lotze. Bowne taught for many years in the School of Theology at Boston University, he founded the Graduate School and the Philosophy Department, and he became known as the “Father of Boston Personalism.”

The Nineteenth Century Theology Unit, the Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit, and the Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit jointly invite papers on the subject of (Boston) Personalism and especially addressing topics that arise in light of the Annual Meeting’s theme of “Freedom.” Papers may consider nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophical and theological movements that influenced the development of Personalism (as it arose in affirmation of or in contradiction to them) as well as persons, positions, and movements that were directly or indirectly influenced by Personalism, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the American Civil Rights Movement or attempts at West European Integration after World War II. We also invite papers that delve into original personalist thought and its relevance in contemporary discussions of personalism, connecting past and present by considering how early personalist thought continues to be relevant in our world today.

Arminianism:

The Presidential theme for the Annual Meeting, “Freedom,” is at the heart of Arminian theology, with its emphasis on human free will and divine non-coercion with regard to salvation. The Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit invites proposals of papers that explore Arminianism from a variety of theological, historical, and cultural perspectives. We encourage free interpretation of this theme, as AAR President Leela Prasad said in describing it, “Let us ask ourselves questions that we have asked before, but let us ask them with new sensibilities that allow us to draw on the past, be haunted by our times, and search anew.”

Book Panel:

Volume 31, the final volume of John Wesley's Letters within the *Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Abingdon), comprising a total of seven volumes, was published in August 2024. During the upcoming book panel, invited scholars including Randy Maddox, the editor of the Bicentennial Edition, will examine the implications of this comprehensive collection, which includes all letters available online, for our understanding of John Wesley's life and work. This panel is by invitation only.

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

- Jung Choi, Duke University
jchoi@div.duke.edu
- Natalya Cherry, Brite Divinity School
natalyacherry@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit

Call for Proposals

The Womanist Approaches to Religion & Society Unit welcomes papers that highlight one or more of the following topics:

Remembering Coretta Scott King (Invited Panel and requested AAR Special Session)

While Coretta Scott King is recognized as the architect of the King legacy and founder of the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change, few realized the integral placement of her justice worldview and social activism to influence the public role of Martin Luther King, Jr, and the Civil Rights Movement. Historical and sociocultural aesthetics informed a classically trained musicologist, Scott King's justice lens. Essentially, Scott

King was already championing social change through peaceful protest and introduced MLK to Gandhi's philosophical praxis of *satyagraha*. As a proponent for the Center, Scott King traveled extensively to speak on nonviolence, anti-war and peace justice activist for religious freedom, racial and economic justice, LGBTQIA dignity, and gender justice.

The Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit focuses on Scott King as a justice coalition builder, organizational leader, and spiritually grounded orator in her own right.

Special Session Endorsers: Cultural African Diaspora Unit / Theology of MLK Unit / Women and Religion Unit / Black Theology Unit / Racial & Ethnic Minorities Unit / SBL-Womanist Interpretation & Public Theology Unit. In collaboration with the African Diaspora Religions Unit, the Womanist Approaches Unit invites papers that address one of the following themes:

[Kitchen Table Conversations](#)

"My sensorial childhood breakfast table memories merged aromas of coffee brewing, bacon frying and burning hair from overheated hot combs" – Scott Alves Barton

Foodways and faith traditions travel as liminal archives within every individual or group in migration, immigration, or as refugees. In today's hyper-ultra-processed world, we continually need to reflexively ask, Who do we need to be thankful for that sourced, cooks and placed this food on our table; preserving our culinary cultural traditions, whether sacred or profane, in feasting or in famine?

In 1990, master photographer MacArthur Genius Carrie Mae Weems created her iconic social documentary "Kitchen Table Series imagining and documenting the battle around the family between women and men, friends and lovers, parents and children." In addition to potential skirmishes, the kitchen table is foundational as a locus of commensality, particular ways of knowing, and intergenerational "ensilled" teaching and learning, historically via women's work and knowledge. Our foodways tell stories of how we are who we are, where we came from, and what we hold dear. Lauding sacred rites of communion, sacrifice, and succor. Kitchen tables have also been sites of adolescent homework, quilting and needlework, memorialization of events, putting food by, flirting, bandaging cuts, beauty practices, joking and games playing, gossiping in cafeterias, storytelling, sharing grace and prayer. Kitchen Table stories/storytelling evolve with each telling and respective audiences, just as Lumbee traditions used story work to relate the tribe's history, present, and futurity. These tables are centers for

healing and mourning, planning strategies for change, refusal of negative paradigms, starting a radical feminist press, or inciting revolution...Quoting poet Joy Harjo, "The world begins at a kitchen table, perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing, crying, eating the last sweet bite..."

We welcome folks to submit materials for this roundtable discussion.

[The Women Who Made Malcolm X Possible](#)

2025 is the 100th anniversary of Malcolm X/el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, revolutionary, civil/human rights activist, and Muslim minister (May 19, 1925 – February 21, 1965). Centering his work on the work Black women do to usher in freedom and resurrecting from history the love and teachings of his mother, wife, children, and other women who made him possible, we have chosen to honor Malcolm by honoring the Black women of his world.

Writing on the beautiful intersections between Malcolm, Martin, and James Baldwin and their mothers, "The Three Mothers," author, Anna Malaika Tubbs asks, 'How was Malcolm influenced by Louise Little's roots from the rebellious Carib island nation of Grenada?' She, who spoke several languages, her 'home-training' lessons in recitations of the alphabet in French, and admonitions to her children to study, and correct misinformation given by their white teachers?'

C. S'thembile West's new book, *Nation Women Negotiating Islam: Moving Beyond Boundaries in the Twentieth Century* (2023), redeems the role of women, mothers, sisters, and daughters in the Nation of Islam (NOI). It sits at the intersection of African studies, Religious and Islamic Studies, providing the necessary counternarrative to past transgressive discourses. West recognizes and underscores the agency of NOI women in their negotiation of gender norms, sexual propriety, leadership models, education, and family building as a Black national project. Given our current political climate, this book can work as a tool for modeling equity and respectful scholarship on women's roles as organizers, leaders, and change agents dedicated to uplifting and rehabilitating their communities as stewards of West's arguments of a "politics of protection."

We invite paper proposals in conversation with this theme and C. S'thembile West's book.

Womanist Approaches to FREEDOM

According to the incoming President's remarks, the AAR units are invited to explore the imaginary of freedom in its widest sense: "across traditions and religions, practices and

policies, art and ecology, and poetry and performance... *“Who decides who or what is free; for how long? Where is freedom preserved, where is it lost?”. . . “Can there be freedom without justice? Does, or should, freedom equal material and emotional well-being? How does one reconcile competing senses of freedom?”*

The Womanist Approaches Unit also invites contributors to articulate visions for justice pathways to a viable horizon of freedom for all. Proposals are welcomed that raise dilemmas for surviving and thriving in a country or societal environments that embrace a mythology of freedom and democracy while enacting legalized modes of subjugation and disparity. What do such intersectional analyses reveal about the impact of existential freedoms on privileged or marginalized groups, and how do they break through hegemonic assumptions? Proposals can include papers, panels, literary, and artistic approaches to elucidate a critical lens.

Open Call for Papers

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

- Valerie Miles-Tribble, American Baptist Seminary of the West
macsvmt@gmail.com
- Melanie Jones, Union Presbyterian Seminary
melaniechantejones@gmail.com

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit

Call for Proposals

The Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society seeks proposals from emerging scholars that utilize womanist methodologies and engage womanist topics. We intend to co-sponsor the June session with the Open and Relational Theologies Unit.

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

- Valerie Miles-Tribble, American Baptist Seminary of the West
macsvmt@gmail.com
- Melanie Jones, Union Presbyterian Seminary
melaniechantejones@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Women and Religion Unit

Call for Proposals

Theme: Freedom

The Women and Religion Unit of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) is delighted to announce its call for proposals for the 2025 Annual Meeting, organized around the theme of "Freedom." Inspired by AAR President Dr. Leela Prasad's vision, this theme invites critical engagement with the multifaceted concept of freedom: its meanings, practices, and implications in religious, cultural, and social contexts. We aim to explore how women's experiences, feminist thought, and intersectional approaches redefine freedom across diverse traditions and contexts.

We invite proposals that creatively and critically engage with the theme of freedom in ways that illuminate its possibilities and limitations. Submissions are encouraged to focus on the intersections of religion, gender, race, class, and sexuality, with an emphasis on the voices of women, non-binary individuals, and marginalized communities. Below, we outline several suggested themes and areas of focus. While these are not exhaustive, they are intended to inspire thought-provoking contributions.

1. Academic Freedom and Feminist Scholarship

Academic freedom is increasingly under threat in many parts of the world, especially for scholars engaged in feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial work. Women, non-binary, and contingent faculty often face significant challenges, including precarious employment, limited institutional support, and cultural or political censorship. Within the field of religion, feminist scholars encounter unique constraints as they challenge patriarchal traditions and propose alternative frameworks. We encourage proposals that explore:

- The role of feminist scholarship in resisting restrictions on academic freedom.
- Case studies of institutional or community responses to the suppression of women's voices in academia.
- Strategies for fostering solidarity and collective action among feminist scholars in religious studies.
- The intersections of academic freedom, feminism, and religious identity in global contexts, particularly in spaces where authoritarian regimes or fundamentalist ideologies impose limitations.

Proposals might also reflect on how feminist theology and praxis can create alternative academic and intellectual spaces that empower marginalized voices.

2. Women's Rights and Freedom

Religion often serves as both a site of empowerment and a locus of restriction for women's rights. Across traditions, women continue to confront challenges in advocating for bodily autonomy, reproductive rights, and social and economic justice. These struggles are intensified for marginalized populations, including women of color, immigrants, and those living in contexts of systemic inequality. We welcome proposals that:

- Analyze feminist theological contributions to discussions of reproductive justice and bodily autonomy.
- Critique the role of Christian nationalism in shaping gender-based oppression, including its intersections with sexual violence and racial injustice.

- Explore the impact of transnational feminist movements on religious and cultural understandings of women’s rights.
- Examine alternative religious frameworks for advancing gender equity and justice.

Proposals might also engage with grassroots movements, activist practices, and transnational collaborations that offer innovative pathways for addressing these pressing issues.

3. Freedom in Indigenous and Earth-Based Religious Traditions

For Indigenous communities and practitioners of earth-based religions, freedom is often deeply rooted in relationality—with the land, the cosmos, and community. These traditions offer vital perspectives on liberation, resistance, and ecological justice that challenge dominant Western paradigms of individual autonomy. We invite proposals that explore:

- Indigenous women’s contributions to theologies of liberation, resistance, and ecological care.
- The intersections of land, spirituality, and freedom in Indigenous traditions, particularly in the context of colonial and environmental oppression.
- The reclamation of witchcraft, shamanism, and other earth-based practices as feminist and decolonial acts of resistance.
- The role of ritual, storytelling, and other non-textual practices in articulating visions of freedom.

Proposals might also consider how these perspectives can contribute to broader feminist and ecological theological discourses, particularly in the context of climate justice.

4. Intersectionality and Freedom

Freedom is never a singular experience; it is shaped and constrained by intersecting systems of oppression. Inspired by the Combahee River Collective’s emphasis on the interlocking nature of race, gender, class, and sexuality, this theme seeks to uncover how these intersections impact women’s experiences of freedom and oppression. Potential topics include:

- Theological and ethical critiques of intersecting oppressions within religious communities and practices.

- The impact of intersectionality on women’s religious and spiritual lives, particularly in contexts of migration, diaspora, and exile.
- Case studies of feminist, queer, and anti-racist movements within religious spaces that advance intersectional visions of liberation.
- Innovative theoretical frameworks for understanding freedom at the nexus of intersectional feminist and religious studies.

Proposals might also explore how intersectional approaches challenge traditional religious narratives and practices while opening space for new, inclusive theologies.

5. Historical and Regional Perspectives on Freedom

Freedom is historically and contextually situated, shaped by particular political, social, and cultural conditions. Women’s movements for liberation have often engaged with - and resisted - dominant narratives of freedom, offering alternative perspectives rooted in their specific experiences. We seek proposals that examine:

- The role of women in historical freedom movements, with attention to religious dimensions.
- The legacy of colonial and imperialist projects in shaping discourses of freedom in religious traditions.
- Connections between Boston’s historical significance (e.g., the Freedom Trail) and feminist religious movements for justice and liberation.
- Contemporary regional case studies that highlight how women negotiate freedom within specific cultural and religious contexts.

Proposals might also consider the intersections of memory, resistance, and spirituality in women’s struggles for freedom.

6. Emerging Scholar’s Voices: Collaborative Session with AAR/SBL Women’s Caucus

Collaboration and mentoring are central to feminist and religious studies, offering vital pathways for amplifying emerging voices and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. Together with the AAR/SBL Women's Caucus, we seek to create space for such collaboration, with particular attention to emerging scholars and practitioners. We invite proposals that:

- Highlight new research and perspectives from early-career scholars on freedom, gender, and religion.
- Foster dialogue between scholars, activists, and practitioners to explore collaborative approaches to feminist religious scholarship.

- Examine the role of mentorship and intergenerational collaboration in advancing feminist theological thought and practice.
- Construct a critical analysis of freedom in intergenerational and intercultural learning for gender and religious studies using a feminist or queer theory lens.
- Explore interreligious and intercultural perspectives on freedom, emphasizing collaborative methodologies.

Proposals for these sessions might also include experimental or innovative formats that engage participants actively and creatively.

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
- Tracy McEwan, University of Newcastle, Australia
tracy.mcewan@outlook.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit

Call for Proposals

The Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism unit (WOCSTA) welcomes submissions of individual presentations, organized panels, and roundtable discussions

that are in keeping with the unit's 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. Understanding identity as performative and shifting, we make the very category of "women of color" itself a site for political and intellectual engagement. We encourage non-traditional formats that foster conversation, engagement, and meaning-making among panelists and session attendees.

In keeping with the presidential theme of freedom, we wish to amplify the invitation to *examine* and *envision* "freedom in its widest sense: across traditions and religions, practices and policies, art and ecology, and poetry and performance."

Possible topics/areas of engagement may include:

Practicing Initiative

What are practices of liberated embodiment, especially for women, women-identifying, and non-binary identifying persons, in their respective religious context or in religious-impacted social and political settings?

Religion and Revolutionary Movements

What modalities of freedom might emerge if the wisdoms of religious and revolutionary initiatives are honored, foregrounded, and implemented - together?

- Dialogical examples include conversations between Christianity and Black Liberationist movements, African Traditional Religions and Pan Africanism, Islam and Neo-colonial movements, etc.

Parsing Freedom(s)

We invite examinations of what is lost or conflated about freedoms given political tension and upheaval in local, national, and international contexts.

Possibilities for engagement include but are not limited to:

- Conversations between "intersectionality" (as utilized across various marginalized communities) and "double jeopardy" (as originated in African

American women's experiential life, especially the definition coined by Frances M. Beal)

- The nuances of marginalized reproductive rights given cultural, social, and political contexts
- Explorations of underexplored and under-examined areas of freedom and liberation for women, women-identifying, and non-binary persons

Co-existent Endeavors for Freedom

What can conversation and collaboration between freedom-facing movements look like? Examples include but are not limited to:

- Jewish and Islamic feminisms
- The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Combahee River Collective
- Womanist theologies and minoritized feminist theologies

Pedagogy and Particularity

How can one's pedagogy connect them to community in this current time?

- What does collaboration look like in these contexts, especially with pushback against social justice?
- What does strategy look like?
- What does solidarity look like?

Resistance and Reckoning

What are religious and spiritual resources for resistance? What are spiritual and religious practices that inhabit and/or inspire resistance?

- What are the tangible aims and goals of resistance?
- What might subversive resistance emphasize?
- What does creative and imaginative resistance look like?

Concerning co-sponsored opportunities, WOCSTA is excited to be one of the co-sponsoring units with the African Diaspora Religions unit and their respective proposal for a roundtable discussion, "Kitchen Table Conversations" described below:

Kitchen Table Conversations

“My sensorial childhood breakfast table memories merged aromas of coffee brewing, bacon frying and burning hair from overheated hot combs” – Scott Alves Barton

Foodways and faith traditions travel as liminal archives within every individual or group in migration, immigration, or as refugees. In today’s hyper-ultra-processed world, we continually need to reflexively ask, Who do we need to be thankful for that sourced, cooks and placed this food on our table; preserving our culinary cultural traditions, whether sacred or profane, in feasting or in famine?

In 1990, master photographer MacArthur Genius Carrie Mae Weems created her iconic social documentary “Kitchen Table Series imagining and documenting the battle around the family between women and men, friends and lovers, parents and children.” In addition to potential skirmishes, the kitchen table is foundational as a locus of commensality, particular ways of knowing, and intergenerational “enskilld” teaching and learning, historically via women’s work and knowledge. Our foodways tell stories of how we are who we are, where we came from, and what we hold dear. Lauding sacred rites of communion, sacrifice, and succor. Kitchen tables have also been sites of adolescent homework, quilting and needlework, memorialization of events, putting food by, flirting, bandaging cuts, beauty practices, joking and games playing, gossiping in cafeterias, storytelling, sharing grace and prayer. Kitchen Table stories/storytelling evolve with each telling and respective audiences, just as Lumbee traditions used story work to relate the tribe’s history, present, and futurity. These tables are centers for healing and mourning, planning strategies for change, refusal of negative paradigms, starting a radical feminist press, or inciting revolution...Quoting poet Joy Harjo, “The world begins at a kitchen table, perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing, crying, eating the last sweet bite...”

We welcome folks to submit materials for this roundtable discussion.

Potential Co-sponsors: Religion and Food Unit, Religion and Memory Unit, Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit, Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit, Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit, Queer Studies in Religion, and Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit

WOCSTA is also delighted to join with the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit as a co-sponsor on the "The Women Who Made Malcolm X Possible" session described below:

[The Women Who Made Malcolm X Possible](#)

2025 is the 100th anniversary of Malcolm X/el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, revolutionary, civil/human rights activist, and Muslim minister (May 19, 1925 – February 21, 1965). Centering his work on the work Black women do to usher in freedom and resurrecting from history the love and teachings of his mother, wife, children, and other women who made him possible, we have chosen to honor Malcolm by honoring the Black women of his world.

Writing on the beautiful intersections between Malcolm, Martin, and James Baldwin and their mothers, “The Three Mothers,” author, Anna Malaika Tubbs asks, ‘How was Malcolm influenced by Louise Little’s roots from the rebellious Carib island nation of Grenada?’ She, who spoke several languages, her ‘home-training’ lessons in recitations of the alphabet in French, and admonitions to her children to study, and correct misinformation given by their white teachers?’

C. S’thembile West’s new book, *Nation Women Negotiating Islam: Moving Beyond Boundaries in the Twentieth Century* (2023), redeems the role of women, mothers, sisters, and daughters in the Nation of Islam (NOI). It sits at the intersection of African studies, Religious and Islamic Studies, providing the necessary counternarrative to past transgressive discourses. West recognizes and underscores the agency of NOI women in their negotiation of gender norms, sexual propriety, leadership models, education, and family building as a Black national project. Given our current political climate, this book can work as a tool for modeling equity and respectful scholarship on women’s roles as organizers, leaders, and change agents dedicated to uplifting and rehabilitating their communities as stewards of West’s arguments of a “politics of protection.”

We invite paper proposals in conversation with this theme and C. S’thembile West’s book.

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

- Hinasahar Muneeruddin
hmunee@live.unc.edu
- Oluwatomisin Oredein, Brite Divinity School
tomioredein@gmail.com

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

World Christianity Unit

Call for Proposals

At the annual meeting in November 2025, the World Christianity Unit plans to feature two sessions solely within our unit, as well as one session co-sponsored with the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit and the Religious Conversions Unit. We are hoping that all our sessions will speak in some way to the AAR presidential theme of “freedom.”

Keeping the theme of freedom in mind, we are seeking papers for our first session that will touch on the relationship between Christianity and nationalism. Given the current proliferation of nationalisms, there are many opportunities to explore Christianity’s historical relationship to freedom, including through various approaches to mysticism and other forms of spirituality; democracy and independence; a hermeneutic of freedom in the context of Christianity; and the dilemma that arises when Christianity is found on both sides of a national or international conflict, whether violent or non-violent. Potential topics include, but are of course not limited to, the intrareligious dynamics of the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine and Russia; competing forms of nationalism in India, including Hindutva and Northeast Indian Christian nationalism; Christian nationalism African; and the age of independence in Latin America.

In light of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in 2025, we intend for our second session to historically examine Nicaea through the lens of World Christianity. We are particularly interested in papers addressing questions of orthodoxy, transgression, and power regarding the Nicene Creed, eventually expanded at Constantinople with an added emphasis on the Holy Spirit. We would like to receive papers that think critically about potentially problematic aspects of Nicaea, especially as the defining moment of Christendom. In what ways do contemporary Christian leaders still long for Christendom and the power associated with it? This topic relates to questions of who holds the power to decide what happens for Christian congregations internally, as well as for larger denominational structures. On the other hand, in what ways might Nicaea be celebrated for its ability to bring about unity within Christianity? Does Christian unity require a strongman in the process of establishing and maintaining ecumenism? What does it mean to be united in the context of Christianity?

[The World Christianity, Religious Conversions, and Ecclesiological Investigations units invite papers for a joint session](#) exploring the nature of deconversion interpreted as both turning away and turning towards (i.e. deeper conversion) as an exercise of agency. One important feature of 'deconversion' may be a decision to leave or pull back from active association with a religious institution or a traditional faith community. How does disaffiliation function to critique or challenge religious organizations? What role does the abuse and exercise of power, especially institutional power, play in the process of deconversion? How might one consider the distinction between rejecting an institution and relinquishing a religious identity altogether?

Likewise, alternative sources of community, solidarity, and spiritual meaning may be significant pull factors that facilitate religious change. Where are people going and why are they drawn there? Following deconversion, in what ways, if any, do religious traditions still shape an individual's idea of "authentic community"? This panel seeks papers that advance our understanding of what changes and what remains the same, or even intensifies, when people find the freedom to redefine their religious belonging and turn to spiritual practices they experience as more lifegiving?

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

- Grace Vargas, Texas Christian University
g.vargas@tcu.edu
- Janice McLean-Farrell, New Brunswick Theological Seminary
jmclean-farrell@nbts.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

World Christianity Unit

Call for Proposals

For the June 2025 virtual meeting, the World Christianity Unit is seeking papers that respond to the presidential theme of freedom. Specifically, we are interested in papers that will touch on the relationship between Christianity and nationalism. Given the current proliferation of nationalisms, there are many opportunities to explore Christianity's historical relationship to freedom, including through various approaches to mysticism and other forms of spirituality; democracy and independence; a hermeneutic of freedom in the context of Christianity; and the dilemma that arises when Christianity is found on both sides of a national or international conflict, whether violent or non-violent. Potential topics include, but are of course not limited to, the intrareligious dynamics of the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine and Russia; competing forms of nationalism in India, including Hindutva and Northeast Indian Christian nationalism; the age of independence in Latin America.

In light of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in 2025, we are also planning to historically examine Nicaea through the lens of World Christianity. We are particularly interested in questions pertaining to orthodoxy, transgression, and power regarding the Nicene Creed, eventually expanded at Constantinople with an added emphasis on the Holy Spirit. We would like to receive papers that think critically about potentially

problematic aspects of Nicaea, especially as the defining moment of Christendom. In what ways do contemporary Christian leaders still long for Christendom and the power associated with it? This topic relates to questions of who holds the power to decide what happens for Christian congregations internally, as well as for larger denominational structures. On the other hand, in what ways might Nicaea be celebrated for its ability to bring about unity within Christianity? Does Christian unity require a strongman in the process of establishing and maintaining ecumenism? What does it mean to be united in the context of Christianity?

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Chairs

- Grace Vargas, Texas Christian University
g.vargas@tcu.edu
- Janice McLean-Farrell, New Brunswick Theological Seminary
jmclean-farrell@nbts.edu

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

We invite proposals on the following topics. Please contact the organizing scholar(s) 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):

"Kundalini"

Ruth Westoby ruthwestoby@gmail.com

Marleen Thaler marleen.thaler@univie.ac.at

"Yoga, Asceticism, and Bodily Discipline"

Stuart Sarbacker Stuart.Sarbacker@oregonstate.edu

Alba Rodriguez alba.rodriguezjuan@email.ucr.edu

"Authenticity Discourses in Yoga"

Patton Burchett peburchett@wm.edu

"Yoga, Yogis, and the Boundaries of Science"

Patton Burchett peburchett@wm.edu

"Trans Spaces / Queer Spaces in Yoga"

Laurah Klepinger leklepin@utica.edu

"The Scholar-Practitioner in Yoga"

Christa Kuberry christakuberry@gmail.com

"Transformations of Yoga"

Diana Dimitrova diana.dimitrova@umontreal.ca

"Defining Transnational Yoga"

Samantha Griggs samantha.griggs@email.ucr.edu

"Yoga Texts"

Christopher Chapple cchapple@lmu.edu

"Multipolar/Vulnerable Spaces in Yoga"

Allyson Huval allysonhuval@gmail.com

"Reflections/ interpretations of yoga philosophies and practices through creative arts in contemporary global societies"

Sowmya Ayyar sowmyaayyar.bhuphd@gmail.com

Roundtable Book Review Discussion: *Yogic Traditions and Sacred Sound Practices in the United States* (SUNY 2025)

Brita Heimarck britaheimarck@gmail.com

We are also open to other full-panel proposals on any other topic falling under the purview of Yoga Studies.

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

- Alba Rodriguez Juan
alba.rodriquez.juan@gmail.com
- Christopher Jain Miller, Arihanta Institute / Claremont School of Theology /
University of Zurich
christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit

Call for Proposals

The Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit welcomes full panel proposals for the online meeting in June 2025.

"New Developments in Jain Yoga" (cogen.bohanec@arihantainstitute.org)

Statement of Purpose

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and other areas that have worked at length on these issues, so as to bring an important international component to the Unit.

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alba.rodriguez.juan@gmail.com
- Christopher Jain Miller, Arihanta Institute / Claremont School of Theology /
University of Zurich
christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org

In-person November Annual Meeting 2025

[Yogācāra Studies Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

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 or Jingjing Li, 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. Anyone with questions about how a text panel should be structured is free to contact unit co-chairs Douglas Duckworth (duckworth@temple.edu) and Jingjing Li (j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl).
- Book Panel on Bill Waldron's *Making Sense of Yogācāra* (Eyal Aviv, eviv@gw.edu)
- The role of commentary in Yogācāra (Szilvia Szanyi, szilvia.szanyi@theology.ox.ac.uk)

- Tantra and Yogācāra (Slava Komarovski, ykomarovski@gmail.com and Davey Tomlinson, david.tomlinson@villanova.edu)
- Aesthetics and Yogācāra (Chihying Wu, chihying_wu@berkeley.edu)
- [Book Panel on Jed Forman's *Out of Sight, Into Mind*](#) (Jed Forman, jed.forman@gmail.com)

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

- Jingjing Li, Leiden University
j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl
- Douglas S. Duckworth, Temple University
douglas.duckworth@temple.edu

Online June Annual Meeting 2025

[Yogācāra Studies Unit](#)

Call for Proposals

Open call for papers/panels: New Voices in Yogācāra Studies (contact Jingjing Li, j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl)

Statement of Purpose

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Chairs

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j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl
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douglas.duckworth@temple.edu