

Summer 2014



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# Religious Studies Newsletter

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## Inside:

OUR GRADUATES	2
FACULTY PUBLICATIONS	2
COURSE OFFERINGS	3
MORE COURSES	4
FORTHCOMING EVENTS	5

## Greetings from the Director of Religious Studies!

Last year, my first year as Director of Religious Studies, was both hectic and exciting. Our program sponsored many stimulating events on and off campus. Throughout the year, the "Bridging Cultures- Muslim Journeys: Let's Talk About It" series at the West Lafayette Public Library continued to garner audiences of students, faculty, and folks from around our community. This was also true of the many presentations arranged the Aquinas Educational Fund, such as Professor Emeritus James Davidson's talk, "American Catholics and Their Church: Fact and Fiction," held at St. Tom's last September. In October we held our Open House at which there was much conviviality as well as treats and free t-shirts for our students. It was there that we announced the formation of our new Religious Studies student's association.

Among the many highlights of last year was the conference, "Global ReOrient: Chinese Pentecostal/ Charismatic Movements in the Global East" and the annual Larry Axel Lecture in which Professor Wendy Furman-Adams (Whittier College) guided us through a virtual feast for the eyes with her PowerPoint show, "Visualizing Paradise: Artists Representing Eden Before and After Milton's Paradise Lost." Nearly 100 students and faculty attended that event.

And there were also many smaller events that remind us of just how important our faculty is to our students. One example is Professor Stuart Robertson taking his students in "The Evolution of the Bible and its Revolutionary Effects" up to the Newberry Library in Chicago to look at various editions of the Bible from around the world including the first English translation, the Coverdale Bible of 1514 and an Algonquin translation of the Bible from 1633.

Even though I am writing this in the early (already dog) days of summer, our fall semester is already shaping up with numerous events. Hope to see you there!

Melinda Zook, Director



**Melinda Zook**  
Professor of History  
Director, Religious Studies

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

### Congratulations & Farewell to our Spring 2014 Graduates!

The Religious Studies faculty congratulates all of you, reminding all of you that, "To whom much is given, much is expected."

Brandon Bonwell  
Joshua Crabtree  
Amy DeRosa  
Amanda Rensberger

### Our Outstanding Faculty (recent publications)

**Michael Bergmann** (PHIL) with Patrick Kain published the edited volume, *Challenges to Moral and Religious Belief: Disagreement and Evolution*, (Oxford, 2014).

**Paul Draper** (PHIL) has two forthcoming chapters, "Meet the New Skeptical Theism, Same as the Old Skeptical Theism" and "Confirmation Theory and the Core of CORNEA," in *Skeptical Theism: New Essays*, eds., Trent Dougherty and Justin McBrayer (Oxford, 2014).

**Angelica Duran** (ENGL) published "Blindness according to Milton and his Contemporaries," *Mosaic - Special Issue: Blindness* 46/3 (2013): 141-58 and has another forthcoming article, "Walter Raleigh through John Milton, According to William Carlos Williams," *William Carlos Williams Review* 31/1 (2014). She also has edited two forthcoming collections, *The King James Bible, Across Borders and Centuries* (Duchesne University Press, 2014) and with Yuhan Huang, *Mo Yan in Context: Nobel Laureate and Global Storyteller* (Purdue University Press, 2014).

**Daniel H. Frank** (PHIL & JS) published "Jewish Perspectives on Natural Theology" in *The Oxford Handbook of Natural Theology*, ed., Russell Re Manning (Oxford, 2013) and has several books and chapters forthcoming in 2014, including, *Spinoza on Politics*, with Jason Waller (Routledge, 2014); "Virtue, Happiness, and the Human Good" in *The Blackwell History of Philosophy in Medieval Islam, Judaism, and Christianity*; and "Maimonides and Spinoza on the Interpretation of Scripture" in *Jewish Philosophy Past and Present: Contemporary Responses to Classical Sources*.

**Sandor Goodhart** (ENGL & JS) published *The Prophetic Law: Essays on Judaism, Girardianism, Literary Studies, and the Ethical* (Michigan State University Press, 2014) and "Looking for Mr. Green" in *The Saul Bellow Journal*.

**Dan V. A. Olson** (SOC) with Jong Hyun Jung authored, "Religion, Stress, and Suicide Acceptability in South Korea," *Social Forces* 92/3 (2014): 1039-1059.

**Rebekah Klein-Pejšová** (HIST & JS) published "Beyond the 'Infamous Concentration Camps of the Old Monarchy': Jewish Refugee Policy from Wartime Austria-Hungary to Interwar Czechoslovakia," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 45 (April 2014), 150-166.

**Thomas Ryba** (Theologian in Residence) edited with Vern Redekop as well as contributed to *Girard and Creative Mimesis*, vol. 1, and *Girard and Creative Reconciliation*, vol. 2. (Lexington Books, 2014).

**Melinda S. Zook** (HIST) co-edited the collection, *Challenging Orthodoxies: The Social and Cultural Worlds of Early Modern Women England and Europe* (Ashgate, 2014), wrote the Introduction and contributed the chapter entitled, "Women, Anglican Orthodoxy, and the Church in the Ages of Danger." She also published "A Latitudinarian Queen: Mary II and her Churchmen," in *Women and Religion in Early Modern England* (Ashgate, 2014).

## Some Exciting Religious Studies Courses offered this fall

*(Students should consult the Religious Studies webpage for a complete schedule of classes and up-to-date information and changes <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/religious-studies/courses/>)*

### **REL 200: Introduction to Study of Religion**

Professor Ashley Purpura

MWF 4:30-5:20; BRNG 2290

This course offers an introduction to the interdisciplinary, multicultural, and academic study of religion where students are invited to reflect on religion as a cultural phenomenon and to survey the major facets of nine different religious traditions. This course features multiple field trips, expert guest speakers, religiously-themed films and foods, organized debates, and field research opportunities to develop students as informed global citizens who can recognize, respect, and speak with confidence about religion. All students are welcome!

### **REL 201: Interpretation of the New Testament**

Professor Thomas Ryba

MWF 10:30-11:20; REC 112

This course provides a critical overview of the religious content of the New Testament. Our working assumption is that theological interpretations of these Scriptures can only be made after they are fully understood within the historical, social, and intellectual contexts from which they emerged. In our studies, we shall look at how the religious thought of early Christians was influenced by the mythologies, cultures, philosophies and theologies of other Mediterranean peoples in late antiquity.

### **REL 230: Religions of the East (Meets w/PHIL 230)**

Professor Ashley Purpura

MWF 2:30-3:20; WTHR 172

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to the study of Indian, Southeast Asian, Chinese, and Japanese religious traditions, including: Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and Zoroastrianism. The philosophical and religious contexts of each tradition will be considered by examining its history, primary texts, key teachings, rituals, present practice and diverse cultural expressions.

### **REL 231: Religions of the West (Meets w/PHIL 231)**

Professor Thomas Ryba

MWF 1:30-2:20; WTHR 160

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to the three Abrahamic monotheistic religions of the West: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will examine the diversity of practices and belief systems within these religions and address debates within and between communities as well as contemporary concerns. The philosophical and religious contexts of each tradition will be considered by examining its history, primary texts, key teachings, and cultural expressions.

### **REL 317: Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity**

Professor Stuart Robertson

TR 3:00-4:15; ME 1012

This course is a study of the emergence of Judaism and the rise of Christianity. It will include examining the effects of Greek culture, evidence of both anti-Semitism and admiration of the Jews, conversion in a setting of religious pluralism, and the development of Jewish and Christian self-definition within this climate.



### **ENGL 462: The Old Testament as Literature**

Professor Sandor Goodhart

TR 4:30-5:45; KRAN G009

In this course we will read closely selections from Hebrew Scripture - the Pentateuch (the five Books of Moses), the books of the Prophets, and the Holy Writings - with the goal of understanding these texts within the Rabbinical tradition of Biblical interpretation. All texts will be examined in English and no knowledge of the Hebrew language will be expected.

### **ENGL 463: The New Testament as Literature**

Professor Angelica Duran

MWF 10:30-11:20; HEAV 102

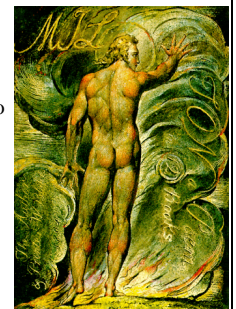
This course takes a multi-disciplinary approach to the New Testament Bible. Close readings will be contextualized by the textbook. Our semester will revolve around understanding the Bible; Special Collections research; and film viewing, all of which will be supplemented by events on campus, the Greater Lafayette area, and maybe even Chicago.

### **ENGL 544: Milton**

Professor Angelica Duran

MWF 12:30-1:20; HEAV 128

In this class, we will read the works of the epitomal "dead white male author" and explore his global reception worldwide, to see why great authors like Virginia Woolf kept returning to him; the Spanish Inquisition put him on its prohibited lists; and why U.S. founding fathers Thomas Jefferson and John Adams sought guidance and solace from Milton's works as they struggled to define a new nation. Close readings will be supplemented by Special Collections training and a Chicago field trip.



*Religious Studies Courses continued*

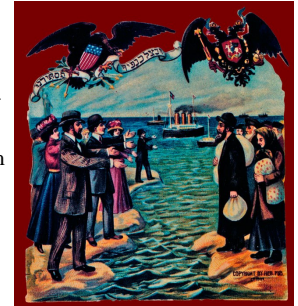


**HIST 317: History of the Christian Church I** Professor Deborah Fleetham MWF 1:30-2:20; LWSN B155  
This course traces the Christian Church's evolution from its foundations to the fourteenth century and will concentrate on five interlocking themes: 1) the Christianization of the Roman Empire and of the Germanic peoples; 2) the hierarchical structure and governance of the Church; 3) the relations between the Church and various monarchies; 4) the rise, triumph, and decline of papal authority; and 5) the principal movements aiming at the reform of the Church.

**HIST 390: Jews in the Modern World**

Professor Rebekah Klein-Pejsova MWF 10:30-11:20; UNIV 301

This survey of Jewish history examines Jewish responses to modernity with special attention to the Jewish relationship with the state and with the surrounding non-Jewish society, Jewish cultures, and the diversity of the modern Jewish experience. Special attention will be given to strategies of survival, modernization, and dissent in the Jewish and non-Jewish world using a variety of primary and secondary sources, including memoirs, film and music.



**HONR 199 The Evolution of the Bible and its Revolutionary Effects**

Professor Stuart Robertson MWF 1:30 - 2:20; REC 117

This course is designed for Honors College students. The Bible is the most read book, or maybe the most talked-about book of any that has ever been written. Many people had a hand in writing it, and far more than that have tried to say what it means. Its ideas have helped to shape our ideas about not only God, but about business, architecture, ethics, race, the relationship of men and women in society, etc. Sometimes the Bible is mis-used to form opinions, but even a misuse is a use. You may not even realize how the Bible has touched your life, even if you think you're not religious.

**PHIL 206: Philosophy of Religion**

Professor Michael Bergmann TR 1:30-2:20 (M 8:30; M 9:30 M 11:30); BRNG 2290

The course encourages critical reflection on traditional and contemporary views about God and other religious ideas. Topics include arguments for God's existence, the problem of evil, understanding the divine attributes, miracles, religious pluralism, and life after death.

**PHIL 505: Islamic and Jewish Philosophy and the Classical Tradition (and Its Critique by Spinoza)**

Professor Dan Frank TR 1:30-2:45; BRNG 1248

This course examines medieval and early modern philosophical traditions. We begin by reading Plato's Republic, a key foundational text for thinkers working in Arabic-speaking lands. Our focus will turn to a group of philosophers who lived between the 10th-12th centuries, a high point in medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophy, before Greek philosophy was rediscovered in Christian Europe. Next, we examine Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, a ground-breaking, founding document in modern political thought and biblical criticism, but also as a work engaged in the philosophical monotheisms of the medieval past.

**For more information about all of our courses,  
please visit:**

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/religious-studies/courses/>

*Exciting Upcoming Religious Studies Events: Mark your calendars!*

**Thursday, August 28, Bridging Cultures – Muslim Journeys, “Let’s Talk About It – Round 2**, presents a discussion of *In The Country of Men* translated by Hisham Matar, led by Professors Idrissi Alami and Lynne Dahmen. West Lafayette Public Library, 6:30pm, Elm room.

**Saturday, September 6**, St. Boniface Catholic Church presents **German Fest**: music, dancing, carnival rides, games, food and beer! Family-orientated fun - free and open to the public. Located at 318 N. 9th St, Lafayette, 4:30-11:00pm.

**Monday, September 15, Bridging Cultures – Muslim Journeys, “Let’s Talk About It – Round 2**, presents a movie showing, *Persepolis*, discussion led by Professors Idrissi Alami and Lynne Dahmen. West Lafayette Public Library, 6:00pm, Elm room.

**Wednesday, September 17, The Jewish Studies Noon Series** presents, Andrew Fogel (PhD candidate, HIST), “*Supermentsh*: Superman’s Covert and Overt Jewish Origins,” 12:30, Beering Hall, B222.

**Thursday, September 18, Bridging Cultures – Muslim Journeys, “Let’s Talk About It – Round 2**, presents a discussion of *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, led by Professors Idrissi Alami and Lynne Dahmen. West Lafayette Public Library, 6:30pm, Elm room.

**Thursday, September 25**, Purdue will host the **Discovery Lecture Series**. The Philosophy Department has invited the renowned philosopher Alvin Plantinga (Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at both University of Notre Dame and Calvin College) to speak on “Religion, Science, & Naturalism: Where the Conflict Really Lies” 1:30pm in Fowler Hall. A book signing will follow. This event is free and open to the public.

**Sunday, September 28, The Aquinas Education Foundation** and Religious Studies present Dr. Elinore Stump. Details forthcoming.

**Thursday–Saturday, September 25-27**, The Department of Philosophy presents, **Faith and Reason: Themes from Swinburne**. This conference is organized by Michael Bergmann & Jeffrey Brower. For more information, visit: [http://www.conf.purdue.edu/landing\\_pages/swinburne/](http://www.conf.purdue.edu/landing_pages/swinburne/)

**Thursday, October 16, Bridging Cultures – Muslim Journeys, “Let’s Talk About It – Round 2**, will present a discussion of *House of Stone* by Anthony Shadid, led by Professors Idrissi Alami and Lynne Dahmen. West Lafayette Public Library, 6:30pm, Elm room.

**Monday, October 20** Jewish Studies & Religious Studies will host the annual **Larry Axel Lecture**. This year’s speaker is Victoria Aarons (Professor of English, Trinity University) speaking on “The Shape of Memory: Post-Holocaust Literary Representation,” 8:00 p.m., RAWL 1062.

**Wednesday, October 22, The Jewish Studies Noon Series** presents Nicole Fourman (Winner of the 2014 Edward Simon B'nai B'rith Barzillai Lodge No. 111 Prize in JS) speaking on, “The Jewish Dietary Laws: A Matter of Interpretation,” 12:30 in Stewart 313.

**Wednesday, November 12, The Jewish Studies Noon Series** presents Rebekah Klein-Pejšová (HIST & JS) speaking on, “Between Refugees and the State: Hungarian Jews and Jewish Refugee Policy in Wartime Austria-Hungary,” 12:30 in Stewart 313.

**Thursday, November 13, Bridging Cultures – Muslim Journeys, “Let’s Talk About It – Round 2**, presents a discussion of *Broken Verse* by Kamila Shamsie, led by Professors Idrissi Alami and Lynne Dahmen. West Lafayette Public Library, 6:30pm, Elm room.

**Thursday, November 20, The Aquinas Educational Foundation** and Religious Studies presents Robert Segal (Chair of Religious Studies, University of Aberdeen) speaking on, “Can there be a Christian Social Science? The Case of William Robertson Smith.” More information forthcoming.

**Monday, December 1, Bridging Cultures – Muslim Journeys, “Let’s Talk About It – Round 2**, presents a movie showing, *Door to the Sky*, discussion led by Professors Idrissi Alami and Lynne Dahmen. West Lafayette Public Library, 6:00pm, Elm room.

**Thursday, December 4, Bridging Cultures – Muslim Journeys, “Let’s Talk About It – Round 2**, presents a discussion of *Dreams of Trespass* by Fatima Mernissi, led by Professors Idrissi Alami and Lynne Dahmen.

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