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
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)

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<td>Paul Draper (PHIL)</td>
<td>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).</td>
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<td>Daniel H. Frank (PHIL &amp; JS)</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>Rebekah Klein-Peřšová (HIST &amp; JS)</td>
<td>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.</td>
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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 have 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-oriented 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), "Supernemesis: 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.


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/

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.


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.


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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