

Fall 2015

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Interdisciplinary Research
and
Teaching Excellence in the Humanities

DEPARTMENT GREETINGS

Greetings from Mount Oread and the beautiful KU campus! 2015 heralded many changes in the Department of Religious Studies. From adapting to state of Kansas budget cuts to pressing forward into the expanding digital university, Religious Studies finds itself in a brave new academic world. And while things may be changing quickly in the world around us, our message in Smith Hall remains constant: religions have been and remain among the most powerful forces shaping human history, and deepening our knowledge of these forces helps broaden our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. It is to this work all our endeavors ultimately lead.

Religious Studies moved forward in our work with articulated goals in 2015: interdisciplinary research and teaching excellence in the humanities. Deepening our already strong interdisciplinary research, teaching, and engagement, Religious Studies is expanding opportunities for our students and faculty to work across campuses and departments. Dr. Luke Bobo brought REL 377 Religion and

Society in Tension to the KU Edwards campus for the fall 2015 semester, and Dr. Jackie Brinton will teach REL 747 Seminar in Religion, Society, and Social Change in spring 2016 as part of the MA in Global and International Studies for servicemen and women at Fort Leavenworth. Teaching across campuses is bringing us new students from a wide range of disciplines, all interested in the way religious studies can inform work from military service to business. Meanwhile, Director of Graduate Studies Dr. Molly Zahn and the Studies Committee are increasing the interdisciplinary influence of Religious Studies on the Lawrence campus, through a new Graduate Certificate Program. This certificate will allow students enrolled in other graduate programs at KU to gain competence in religious studies perspectives, contributing to interdisciplinary work in another field.

On the front of teaching excellence, the Department of Religious Studies holds fast to our knowledge that the humanities and understanding the cultures and peoples of the world are intrinsically valuable. We look to the pioneering work of our professors, like Dr. Jackie Brinton, whose new book *Preaching Islamic Renewal: Religious Authority and the*

Media in Modern Egypt examines the world and influence of Egyptian televangelist Muhammad Mitwalli Shar'rawi. Brinton's book shows us that while Shar'rawi's message itself was not innovative (although it helped restore a more classical view of the Islamic religion) his use of media greatly transformed peoples' access to his message. You can read more about Dr. Brinton's book via a KU News article at <https://news.ku.edu/2015/10/30/islamic-televangelist-book-explores-how-egyptian-preacher-used-mass-media>, or order the book in its entirety on Amazon.com.

Likewise, Dr. Paul Mirecki is transforming student's access to his class, REL 124 Understanding the Bible, through new media. In addition to being offered in its traditional lecture and discussion section format, this course will be offered online in spring 2016. This is a department first, and one that looks promising – the online course was at enrollment capacity within a few weeks of opening to students. It is our hope that Dr. Mirecki's innovative efforts in accessible learning will open the door to other professors in our department offering online courses. Through online learning, Religious Studies is able to make our

courses available to a student population that is balancing work-life-education responsibilities more than ever before. Online courses also increase our presence beyond the Lawrence campus, making a KU Religious Studies education available to more of the Kansas and regional population.

While we hold on to our solid foundation in humanities-based learning, it is our interdisciplinary work and a dedication to teaching excellence moving the Department of Religious Studies into the future. As we continue wrestling quality and continuity with the demands of a world (and student body) for more technology and flexibility, the Department of Religious Studies gives pause for Pope Francis' recent tweet: Onward – with serenity and determination.

On a personnel note:

We bid adieu and happy retirement to Dr. Robert Shelton, who dedicated 48 years to the Department of Religious Studies, this past May. Dr. Shelton is now associate professor emeritus at the University of Kansas. We know he looks forward to spending much time with grandchildren.

We also said farewell to our Librarian/Archivist, Melissa Fisher Isaacs, who joined the staff at the Lawrence Public Library in August of 2015. Melissa Fisher Isaacs served as the Moore Reading Room Librarian and Archivist for three years, and was instrumental in increasing the visibility and breadth of the Religion in Kansas Project. A champion for open and available research, she placed the Religion in Kansas Project's research online via Omeka: <http://ksreligion.omeka.net/>. She secured additional funding for the Religion in Kansas Project through applying for a Carnegie-Mellon Grant from the American Libraries Association; this successful grant supported in part the work our two interns did this past summer for the Religion in Kansas Project. Melissa Fisher Isaacs also continued the careful cultivation and stewardship of the Moore Reading Room collections. We wish her all the best in her new position, and thank her for the service she provided to the Moore Reading Room and our department.

PAST EVENTS, 2015

Retirement Reception for Dr. Robert Shelton

The Department hosted a retirement reception on May 1st, 2015 at the Adams Alumni Center to celebrate Dr. Robert Shelton's forty-eight years of service and scholarship in the Department of Religious Studies. The reception was extremely well-attended by friends, family, colleagues, and former students of Dr. Shelton, all sharing the myriad of ways Dr. Shelton influenced their lives. In the words of Chair of the Department Dr. Dan Stevenson, "Bob shaped the Department more than anyone else before or since, guiding its early hires, its curriculum, and its cultivation of outside support, especially in the organization now known as the Friends of the Department of Religious Studies. His support of his colleagues has been unstinting. We salute him and thank him for his unwavering leadership and service."

2015 Annual Friends of the Department of Religious Studies Speaker

The department welcomed Dr. Bron Taylor (Professor of Religion, Nature, and Environmental Ethics at the University of Florida, and a Carson Fellow of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich, Germany) as our annual FODORS speaker on April 13th, 2015. Dr. Taylor's lecture, "Spirituality After Darwin: 'Dark Green' Nature Religion and the Future of Religion and Nature," presented evidence that, especially since Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, a new, global, earth religion has been rapidly spreading around the world. Whether it involves conventional religious beliefs in non-material divine beings, or is entirely naturalistic and involves no such beliefs, it considers nature to be sacred, imbued with intrinsic value, and worthy of reverent care. Those having affinity with such spirituality generally have strong feelings of belonging to nature, express kinship with non-human organisms, and understand the world to be deeply interconnected. Taylor labeled such phenomena 'dark green religion,' noting that its central ethical priority is to defend the earth's biocultural diversity. Taylor provided a wide variety of examples of new forms of religious (and religion-resembling) cultural innovation among those promoting such nature spirituality, from individuals (including artists, scientists, filmmakers, photographers, surfers, and environmental activists), to institutions (including museums, schools, and the United Nations). By tracking these, Taylor provided an opportunity to consider what such spirituality may portend for the religious and planetary future. The lecture was enjoyed by over one hundred attendees in the Kansas Memorial Union.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! 2016 FRIENDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES ANNUAL AWARDS RECEPTION AND SPEAKER

Monday, April 25th, 2015

- 5:30pm** **Annual Friends of the Department of Religious Studies Annual Banquet**
Phillips Board Room/Paul Adam Lounge, Adams Alumni Center
Please join us as we celebrate the achievements of our undergraduate and graduate students in Religious Studies
RSVP to pbaudino@ku.edu
- 7:00pm** **Annual Friends of the Department of Religious Studies Annual Speaker**
Summerfield Room, Adams Alumni Center
Robert Orsi, Professor of Religion, Grace Craddock Nagle Chair in Catholic Studies, Department of Religious Studies, Northwestern University
Open to the public

For further details regarding upcoming events, please visit our department website, religioustudies.ku.edu.

ACTIVITIES OF DEPARTMENT FACULTY AND STAFF, 2015

Luke Bobo (Lecturer, Ph.D. from University of Missouri – St. Louis, formerly of Lindenwood University) joined KU Religious Studies to teach fall 2015's REL 371 Religion and Society in Tension at the KU Edwards Campus. Using human imagination for the common good was a research focus of Dr. Bobo's this year. His year was filled with talks, lectures, workshops, and meetings around the region. He was the keynote speaker at the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) Zeta Providence Leadership School at KU, a lecturer for the Francis Schaeffer Institute Lecture Series at the Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO, spoke on the aftermath of Ferguson and ongoing racial tensions at the Culture House in Olathe, KS, and co-presented the workshop, "Black Spirituals and Hip Hop/Rap Musical Genres: A Pathway to Explore the Daily Assaults on the Personhood of Afri-

can-Americans" at the Religious Education Association (REA) conference in Chicago. He made trips to Lawrence, KS in September 2015 for the KU Alumni Association National Board Meeting and to Charlottesville, VA in October 2015 for the Consortium of Christian Study Centers National Board Meeting. Dr. Bobo's second book, *A Layperson's Guide to Biblical Interpretation* will be published by Wipf & Stock in 2016.

Jacqueline Brinton's (Assistant Professor, Islam) book, *Preaching Islamic Renewal: Religious Authority and the Media in Modern Egypt*, was published this year by the University of California Press. In spring 2016, Jackie is teaching a course at Fort Leavenworth: REL 737 Seminar in Religion, Media, and Performance, is developing an online version of REL 350 Islam, and will be teaching the course, REL 377 Theo-

ries and Methods in Religious Studies at Smith Hall on the Lawrence Campus.

In January 2015, **Samuel Brody's** (Assistant Professor, Judaism) edited volume in the *Martin Buber Werkausgabe* series came out: *Schriften zum Messianismus [Writings on Messianism]*. This was a massive, 743-page collection of Buber's writings, for which Dr. Brody wrote a short commentary introducing each piece, and to which he also contributed a 20-page general introduction. Dr. Brody also collaborated with the MBW series editors on the critical apparatus. This year was the 50th anniversary of Buber's death, which meant a busy schedule of conferences commemorating the occasion: one at Manhattan College in New York City in April, one at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in May, and one at the

Spertus Institute and the University of Chicago in October. In the summer, Dr. Brody received a New Faculty General Research Fund grant to start work on his next project, and he traveled to Atlanta in November to present on it at the American Academy of Religion conference. Meanwhile, Dr. Brody enjoyed teaching REL 104 in both Honors and regular formats, and getting new courses like Introduction to Judaism and Modern Jewish Thought off the ground.

Aaron Ketchell (Lecturer, Ph.D. from the University of Kansas Department of American Studies). In the past year, Aaron Ketchell taught undergraduate seminars on Christian thought and practice. He also evaluated manuscripts for Oxford University Press, Routledge, and CABI related to Christian history and pilgrimage traditions. His current primary research project is an examination of popular Catholicism at El Santuario de Chimayo, with focus placed upon the multivalent definitions of pilgrimage and the interface between religion and consumer culture in northeast New Mexico. This past May, he spent two weeks in the region engaged in fieldwork and interviewing. Additionally, he continued an exploration of ethnicity and religion in the Strawberry Hill neighborhood of Kansas City, KS, with emphasis upon preserving oral histories of eastern European-derived Catholics.

Bill Lindsey (Associate Professor, Japanese religions) taught REL 106 Living Religions of the East for both spring and fall 2015, in addition to REL 737 Seminar in Religion, Media, and Performance in spring 2015 and REL 502 Special Topics in Religious Studies: Asian Christianities for fall 2015. Dr. Lindsey's primary research inter-

est lies in analyzing how individuals and groups in Tokugawa Japan (1600-1867) constructed and contested social identity and power along lines of ritual and symbol made available through the bricolage of Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, kami worship, local traditions, and individual motivations.

Joshua Lollar (Lecturer, Ph.D. from Notre Dame University, Department of Theology and Religion) is in the midst of finishing a translation project of a text of the 7th c. Byzantine philosopher and theologian Maximus the Confessor. The translation will be published with *Corpus Christianorum* (Brepols Publishers). Dr. Lollar was able to travel to Turnhout, Belgium, to do research on the project in June and stayed in the old 17th c. Turnhout beguinage, where *Corpus Christianorum* has a research center and lodging for authors. Dr. Lollar has also published reviews in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* this year and plans to give a paper at the North American Patristics Society annual meeting in Chicago in May of 2016.

Tim Miller (Professor, new religious movements and religion in America) continues to teach courses in American religion, focusing on new religious movements and intentional communities. In 2015 he published a second edition of his *Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities* with the Couper Press at Hamilton College. He presented papers at two international conferences (in Estonia and England) and gave several public talks to community organizations in Kansas and Colorado. He serves on several academic editorial boards and reviews book and article manuscripts regularly. He is a consulting editor for the World Religions and Spirituality website

(<http://www.wrs.vcu.edu>). Tim is working on the third volume of his survey history of American communities in the twentieth century and hopes to complete it in 2016.

Paul Mirecki (Associate Professor, ancient Near Eastern studies, Adjunct Associate Professor in Classics) recently taught the course "Ancient Egyptian Culture and Religion." In 2015, he read the paper "Twelve Cuneiform Tablets at the University of Kansas (ca. 2350-529 BCE)" at the regional meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research (St. Louis), and two papers on a 17th-century Torah scroll in KU's Spencer Research Library at the regional meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (St. Louis) and the 40th annual meeting of the European Studies Conference at the University of Nebraska (Omaha). He will deliver a plenary lecture at the University of Texas-Austin for the conference "Magic, Miracles and the Paranormal in Religious Imaginaries" where he will read the paper "Dream a Little Dream of Me: Dream Divination in Papyrus Kellis Coptic 7 (ca. 350 CE)" in April 2016. He has served on the executive committee of the Jewish Studies Program and on promotional committees in the department where he is also the chair of the Faculty Development Committee. At KU's Center for Online and Distance Learning he is currently preparing the department's first online course to be taught in Spring 2016.

Hamsa Stainton (Assistant Professor, religions of India and South Asia) has continued to serve as the Undergraduate Director this year, and interacting with our talented majors and minors remains one of the most rewarding parts of his job. In addition to teaching our Senior Seminar in Theories and Meth-

ods (REL 490) and his seminar on the Hindu Epics, Past & Present (REL 543), Dr. Stainton developed and taught a new iteration of our graduate Seminar in Religion, Media and Performance (REL 737) focused on devotional traditions in South Asia. He also continued to offer an advanced Sanskrit class to graduate students, both for our department and the University at large. In March, Dr. Stainton was invited to present a paper at a special regional conference on South Asia at Missouri State University in Springfield. This November, a major edited volume he has been working on for several years goes to the publisher, and he has continued to work on his monograph on Sanskrit poetry and prayer in North India. An article related to this book project goes to print in early 2016. Finally, on a personal note, Dr. Stainton and his wife and are delighted to share that their second daughter, Mirabel Swanson, was born in April!

Dan Stevenson (Professor and Chair, Chinese religions, Buddhism) completes another year as chair of the Department of Religious Studies in 2015. This fall he is teaching REL 555 Religion and Buddhism in China, and will teach a 700-level graduate seminar for spring 2016. Dr. Stevenson is also working on several projects at the moment, all of which focus on Song (960-1279) and Yuan period China (1279-1368): “Serving the Buddhas in Song Dynasty China”, is a book manuscript, revisions on which are nearing completion, that examines ways in which institutional venues, ritual programs, and related sites and media for collective interaction shaped Buddhist discourses and identities; “The ‘Tiantai Four Books’: Protocols of Buddhist Learning in Late Song and Yuan China”, a major article in

progress, explores monastic education and curricula in Buddhist public monasteries of Song and Yuan China, based on *in situ* Song and Yuan-period archival materials, publication colophons, epitaphs of clergy, and monastery inscriptions; and “The Life of a *Lotus Sūtra* Imprint in Southern Song China”, another article in progress, examines the multifaceted life of a block-printed copy of the *Lotus*, preserved in the National Central Library, Taiwan, that was used in the daily devotions of the Buddhist monk Deqiu (fl. 1159-1179), details of which are recorded in a series of hand-written prayers and annotations that Deqiu attached to the text. Drafts of his “Tiantai Four Books” and “*Lotus Sūtra* Imprint” were presented at refereed workshops held, respectively, at Vanderbilt University and Western Michigan University in Spring and Fall of 2015. Dr. Stevenson paid a second visit to Vanderbilt in Fall of 2015 to deliver an invited lecture. In March of 2015, he served as a paper respondent for a panel at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, and as Co-editor, he also oversaw the editing and production of the annual issue of the *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies*.

Molly Zahn (Assistant Professor, Hebrew Bible and early Judaism) has had a busy year, (finally) taking over full-time from Bill Lindsey as Graduate Director (thank you for your patience, Bill!). Her research activities have focused on work on a major commentary on a Dead Sea Scrolls text known as the Temple Scroll, which is under contract with Fortress Press. She also saw an article on the Samaritan Pentateuch appear in *Journal for the Study of Judaism*. She has enjoyed expanding her teaching repertoire to include an upper-level course

and a First-Year Seminar on apocalypticism, and spends much more time than she used to thinking about blood moons, zombies, and the third temple. In October, she participated as a panelist in “Talking Scripture,” an event sponsored by the American Public Square in Kansas City.

Paul Zimdars-Swartz (Lecturer, Ph. D., Claremont Graduate School) debuted a new special topics course for Religious Studies in spring of 2015, REL 502 Special Topics in Religion: Androerotic Devotion and the NFL. Dr. Zimdars-Swartz is teaching REL 341 Mysticism for fall 2015. He will teach REL 374 Religious Perspectives on Selfhood and Sexuality in spring 2016.

Michael J. Zogry continued his term as Director of the Indigenous Studies program at KU in 2015. Ongoing projects include a book about James Naismith’s religious beliefs and a co-edited volume on the topic of indigenous foodways. A highlight of the year was a trip to Ontario, where he conducted research at the Canadian national archives, and in Naismith’s boyhood hometown of Almonte, Ontario. In Almonte he was joined by Naismith’s grandson Jim Naismith and members of Naismith’s family. In addition, he continued in his second term as a co-chair of the national Steering Committee, Native Traditions in the Americas program unit, American Academy of Religion. Zogry also served as Tour Scholar for the Smithsonian Institution Museum on Main Street 2015 Traveling Exhibition, “Hometown Teams,” sponsored by the Kansas Humanities Council. In this capacity he presented public lectures in 9 communities across the state, and wrote an article for the KHC newsletter.

MEET OUR RELIGIOUS STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENTS

Ben Ale-Ebrahim is a first-year MA student in Religious Studies. He graduated from KU with a BA in Anthropology in May 2015 and is currently a GTA in REL 107 Living Religions of the West. His main areas of interest include Islamic studies, Central Asia, secularism, and the anthropology of religion.

Aspen Grender, a first-year M.A. student with interests in philosophy, Christianity, and religion in the U.S., is currently researching and writing about religious representation in film. He plans to focus primarily on recent religious movements in America during the spring semester.

Olivia Groff graduated from Randolph College, located in Lynchburg, Virginia, with a BA in Religious Studies in 2014. For her senior capstone project, she focused on identity reconstruction in a local Native American tribe. This project sparked her interest, and her focus here in the Religious Studies MA program, in the relationship between Native American traditions and Christianity. In 2015, she complete a MAT degree with a focus in Secondary Education at Randolph College. She is currently the GTA for REL 171 Religion in American Society with Dr. Tim Miller.

Katie Hobson is a returning graduate student. She graduated with her B.A. in English and Religious Studies from KU in 2010 and returned to the M.A. program in Fall 2013. As part of the Religion in Kansas Project this summer, she worked on an oral history project about how women in ministry have been received in Kansas. Katie is using this semester to finish her Master's Thesis on girl's puberty ceremonies in Navajo and Mescalero Apache tribes. In addition to her M.A, Katie has completed requirements for a graduate certificate in Indigenous Studies.

Yohung Roh is a returning Korean graduate student in religious studies. He is currently concentrating on East Asian Religions, especially Chinese and Korean Buddhism and Korean Christianity. Since Fall 2014, Yohung has served as a GTA in the East Asian Languages and Cultures Department, teaching Korean 104 and 108. This year, he has presented papers at AAR-Midwest Conference in Ohio Northern University under the title *Weberian Perspective on Religion and Capitalism of China based on Chinese Urban Protestantism and Lay Buddhist Movement*, and at AAR-Mid-Atlantic Conference in Loyola University under the title *Religious Pluralism in the Post-Mao Era of China in a Context of Protestantism and Lay Buddhist Movement*.

Siji Wang is a second year graduate student in the Religious Studies Department. Siji focuses on Buddhist studies in China, especially on popular PureLand practices. She is currently the GTA for *Living Religions of the East* and really enjoys working with Professor Lindsey. Siji is preparing to present at some local conferences next semester, which will be based on her research in a PureLand Play known as *Gui Yuan Jing*.

MOORE READING ROOM NEWS AND NOTES



Staff Changes

Our Librarian/Archivist with the Department of Religious Studies, Melissa Fisher Isaacs, left us in August to take a full-time position at the Lawrence Public Library. Due to state of Kansas budget cuts, college deans put the search for a new librarian/archivist on hold this September. Currently, the Moore Reading Room is open for limited hours thanks to our three intrepid student assistants, Allie Mellor, Lillian Klebenow, and Tirzah Chesky.

Close of a successful grant project

Summer 2015 marked the end of the Moore Reading Room's Carnegie-Whitney grant from the American Library Association. This grant supported in part the work of interns for the Religion in Kansas Project over the 2015 summer. Summer 2015 fieldwork interns **Nathan Bowman** and **Katie Hobson** visited county historical societies and public libraries across the state of Kansas to compile an index of collections related to religion in these local repositories. The results of their efforts are online at the Religion in Kansas Project website, <http://ksreligion.omeka.net/>. The department is thankful to the ALA for their support of the project and the great work it helped our interns achieve!

RELIGION IN KANSAS PROJECT

Professor Tim Miller continues to offer regularly his course on *Religion in Kansas* as the first step in a long-term project to preserve and study all manner of documents, memorabilia, oral lore and information concerning the wide spectrum of religious traditions and communities that have been active in the state, past and present. The course has a sizeable fieldwork component which is designed to train students in oral historiography and archival research by sending them out into the state to gather documents and conduct interviews with persons who have had long-term involvement with religious communities in Kansas. Materials gathered and processed by participants in the course are made available to the public in digital form on the Religion in Kansas Project website, <http://ksreligion.omeka.net/>.

Our long-range objective is to create a comprehensive information center on religion in Kansas, past and present, which will be administered by the Moore Religious Studies Reading Room in Smith Hall, with digital access through the Religious Studies website. We invite our friends and supporters to join us in the project. We depend heavily on public collaboration. Our documentation of Kansas religious history is only as rich as the knowledge and insight that persons who are heirs to this living history are willing to provide us. If you know of materials that should be preserved for posterity, or of persons with long involvement in one or more of the many religious organizations in the state who would be willing to be interviewed, please get in touch with Tim Miller at tkansas@ku.edu or 785-864-7263. All suggestions are welcome, and we will follow up to the extent that our limited resources permit.



ON THE HORIZON: NEW GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

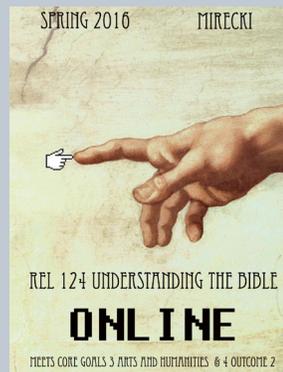
This year, Director of Graduate Studies Molly Zahn and the Studies Committee proposed the department offer a new Graduate Certificate in Religious Studies. The Graduate Certificate in Religious Studies is intended to provide students with a solid grounding in the academic study of religion, including exposure to key theoretical and methodological issues within the interdisciplinary field of religious studies. The certificate program will enable students from differing disciplines to integrate religious studies methodologies, as well as deeper knowledge of particular religious traditions, into their own academic interests or professional training.

Completion of the certificate in religious studies will represent an additional credential for graduate students from a variety of academic disciplines and fields of study. The certificate will enhance the qualifications of students seeking careers in research and teaching, journalism, the nonprofit sector, government, the arts, or any other field in which understanding the breadth of human cultural diversity is useful.

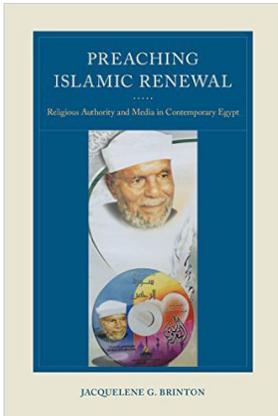
Enrollment in the program will be open to students admitted to a regular KU graduate program as well as students who are not currently enrolled at KU. Keep an eye out for more news as we await the certificate's approval from KU administration.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES ENTERS THE DIGITAL ERA WITH TWO NEW ONLINE COURSES FOR 2016

Religious Studies is going live in 2016! Faculty are taking the department into the digital age by creating online options for religious studies classes. Paul Mirecki will offer an online version of REL 124 Understanding the Bible in spring 2016 after working on development this past fall. Adding to our roster of online courses, Jackie Brinton will develop her popular REL 350 Islam course into an online version during the coming spring. REL 350 Islam online will then be offered for the fall 2016 semester. The online course option is already proving attractive to our students – Dr. Mirecki's online REL 124 reached full class capacity in the first two weeks of open enrollment. Online courses bring flexibility and lower costs to students, while providing the department with an innovative solution to combat lower enrollment numbers and the ability to teach a larger and more diverse student body.



2015 PUBLICATIONS FROM FACULTY IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

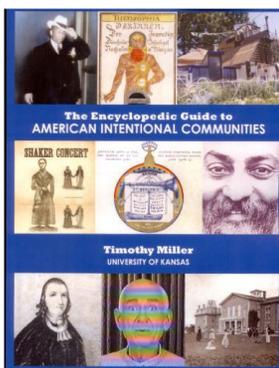
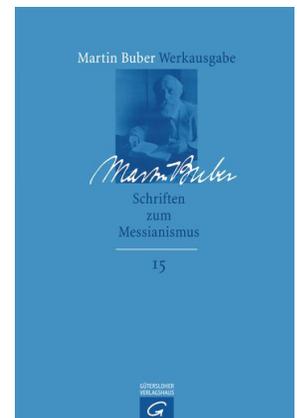


Jackie Brinton, *Preaching Islamic Renewal: Religious Authority and Media in Contemporary Egypt*. University of California Press, 2015. 1st Edition.

Preaching Islamic Renewal examines the life and work of Muhammad Mitwalli Sha'rawi, one of Egypt's most beloved and successful Islamic preachers. His wildly popular TV program aired every Friday for years until his death in 1998. At the height of his career, it was estimated that up to 30 million people tuned in to his show each week. Yet despite his pervasive and continued influence in Egypt and the wider Muslim world, Sha'rawi was for a long time neglected by academics. While much of the academic literature that focuses on Islam in modern Egypt repeats the claim that traditionally trained Muslim scholars suffered the loss of religious authority, Sha'rawi is instead an example of a well-trained Sunni scholar who became a national media sensation. As an advisor to the rulers of Egypt as well as the first Arab television preacher, he was one of the most important and controversial religious figures in late-twentieth-century Egypt. Thanks to the repurposing of his videos on television and on the Internet, Sha'rawi's performances are still regularly viewed. Jacqueline Brinton uses Sha'rawi and his work as a lens to explore how traditional Muslim authorities have used various media to put forth a unique vision of how Islam can be renewed and revived in the contemporary world. Through his weekly television appearances he popularized long held theological and ethical beliefs and became a scholar-celebrity who impacted social and political life in Egypt.

Sam Brody, Editor, *Schriften zum Messianismus*. Random House, 2015. 1st Edition.

A central theme in Buber's Bible studies – and implicitly in his interpretation of Christianity and Zionism – is the messianism. Initially designed as a three-part study, Buber's work on this subject reached only the first part, kingship of God (1932). Previously unpublished lectures and essays by Buber in this volume show Buber's different interpretation of biblical messianism. Brody provides a general introduction and an introduction to each work by Buber.



Tim Miller, *Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities: American Communal Societies Series*. Couper, Hamilton College, 2015. 2nd Edition.

Commune! The word conjures up images of a few isolated idealists, religious fanatics, and social misfits. A commune is a decidedly marginal blip on the American landscape. Nevertheless communes have studded American history - many thousands of them from the seventeenth century to the present. Although many have heard of the Shakers and (perhaps) the Hutterites and the Harmonists, communes - most of which now prefer to be known as intentional communities - represent a largely hidden slice of American history, despite the fact that they have been home to over a million Americans. Many small studies and surveys of American communal movements have been published over the last two hundred years, but the phenomenon of communal living in its fullness remains largely in the shadows. This work has been compiled to dispel those shadows by providing brief sketches of approximately 3,000 American intentional communities from the early days of European colonization down to the present. The work also seeks to provide a few reliable references to primary and secondary sources of information on each community.

OUR AWARD WINNING STUDENTS

Department Graduate Teaching Assistants for 2015-2016:

Ben Ale-Ebrahim: REL 107 Living Religions of the West
Aspen Grender: REL 124 Understanding the Bible
Oliva Groff: REL 171 Religion in American Society
Matthew Leveille: REL 104 Introduction to Religious Studies
Siji Wang: REL 106 Living Religions of the East

Graduate Student serving as Graduate Teaching Assistant in East Asian Languages and Cultures for 2015-2016:

Yohung Roh

Recipients of Friends of the Department of Religious Studies Scholarships for 2015-2016:

Ben Ale-Ebrahim, summer 2015 research and study funding
Siji Wang, summer 2015 research and study funding

Lewis Ethics Essay Awards, 2013-2014:

Eric Chase, "Brahminization and the Formation of Modern India"

Department of Religious Studies Prizes for Student Research, 2013-2014:

Graduate:

Bryan Miller, "Lament Psalms through the Lens of Trauma"
Nathan Bowman, "Recovering the Lost Body: Suzuki Tadashi and the Greek Tragedy"

Undergraduate:

Alexis Butts, "A Fated Friendship: Buddhism and Shinto in Japan"

Central Seminary Award for Creative Leadership:

Peter Bray

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2015 GRADUATES!

Graduate Students:

Nathan Bowman
Diana Brown
Hilary Hauber
Bryan Miller
Peter Rea
Sarina Smith



Undergraduate Students:

Tanner Barker
Cassi Fitzgerald
Rachel Goldstein
Virginia Helgeson
David Knifley
Michael Marcus
Jessica Mitchell
Natalie Strohmyer
Margo Weninger

“HAVE INTEREST, WILL TRAVEL”: FACULTY LECTURE/WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES

Our faculty members like to share their research and interests with groups in Kansas and nearby areas. In most cases, a speaker will give a single, illustrated lecture, although other arrangements can easily be accommodated. Department faculty members already carry full-time loads of teaching, research, and service at KU, so we cannot promise to fill all requests. In some cases well-qualified graduate students are also available for presentations. Travel expenses are subsidized, where necessary, by the Friends of the Department of Religious Studies. For contact information and details regarding faculty expertise, please consult our website (www.religiousstudies.ku.edu) or the department office:

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Lawrence, Kansas 66045
785/864-4663
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In an effort to develop more environmentally sustainable practices, we hope eventually to circulate our annual newsletter in electronic format. If you would like to receive our newsletter by email, please send your address to Trish Baudino Cecil, pbaudino@ku.edu. And send us some news when you do!

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STAY IN CONTACT!

It is always a pleasure to have our friends and former students of the Department stop by Smith Hall for a visit when they are on campus. Should you be further afield, please don't hesitate to drop us a letter or email with your latest news. We will gladly pass it along. We are also pleased to include you on our mailing list for lectures and special programs. Just let us know how to reach you. Thanks for the many things you do to advance the cause of the academic study of religion. We look forward to hearing from you. For regular updates on Religious Studies courses and activities at KU, please see our website, www.religiousstudies.ku.edu.

We're on social media, too!

Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KUReligiousStudies>

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The Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas offers degree programs leading to Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of General Studies, and Master of Arts degrees. We are the only dedicated Religious Studies Department in a public university in Kansas, and one of only six such departments in public universities between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, Canadian border and Gulf of Mexico that offers a graduate degree in the academic study of religion. The department is housed in Irma I. Smith Hall on the main KU campus in Lawrence and is a unit within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. It marks the latest incarnation in a tradition of academic study of religion on Mount Oread that dates back to the turn of the twentieth century.

The generosity of private gifts supports much of our work in the Department of Religious Studies. We are grateful to the many donors who contribute to the work of our department and to the legacy of religious study at the University of Kansas.

Scholarship support and other types of private assistance are vital to the success of the KU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Department of Religious Studies. To make a gift, create an endowed fund, set up a planned gift, or to find out more about the impact of private gifts, please contact Jenna Goodman, CLAS Development Team Lead, 785-832-7417 or jgoodman@kuendowment.org.

You can also mail a check made payable to KU Endowment to:

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Save a stamp and contribute online or by phone! Visit www.kuendowment.org/give to make a contribution to the Department of Religious Studies online or call 785-830-7576 to make a contribution over the phone.

Please make sure to note that your gift should benefit the Department of Religious Studies – and thank you for your support!

The Department of Religious Studies would like to take this opportunity to thank the Friends of the Department of Religious Studies for their support of scholarships, faculty research, the Moore Reading Room, and special programs.



Religious Studies in Kansas
Smith Hall - University of Kansas
1300 Oread Avenue
Lawrence, Kansas 66034-3138

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November 18, 2015

Dear Friend of Religious Studies in Kansas:

The Friends of the Department of Religious Studies at KU is very appreciative of the generous support of benefactors. Private donations are crucial for supporting ongoing educational and community service activities of the Department of Religious Studies and for encouraging innovation and excellence. Public support through the state is not sufficient for all of these activities. This year, our private supporters (including those of past years, whose endowments continue to provide resources) provided \$64,000 for departmental programs. As always, student scholarships were our largest budget item, at \$25,000, and support for the departmental reading room (including acquisitions and student salaries) was second, at \$15,000. Lesser amounts supported faculty research, conferences and lectures, faculty outreach, our annual banquet, and many more things.

Outstanding graduate students continue to seek us out, and we welcome them, of course – but we always have trouble providing them with as much support as we would like. Solid support for students is important for recruitment, retention, and recognition of excellence. As the percentage of state support within the university's budget continues to decline, we need to offset these differences through the private sector.

Please help support the academic study of religion with a contribution directly to the KU Endowment Association. Please indicate clearly that you want to earmark your donation for the Department of Religious Studies. More information on how to contribute to KU Endowment can be found inside this newsletter.

Thank you for your support in the past and the future. We welcome you to attend our Religious Studies Annual Awards Reception and Public Lecture scheduled for Monday, April 25, 2016, as described in this newsletter. Otherwise, please feel free to stop by the department anytime you are on the KU campus. Attendance at our annual banquet comes free to those who make a donation to the Department of Religious Studies.

Sincerely,

Edward R. Canda, Ph.D.
President, Friends of the Department of Religious Studies