



## 2020 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## **General Call Instructions**

### **Deadline**

The deadline for the Call for Proposals is **Monday, March 2, 2020, 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.**

### **Meeting Location**

The 2020 SBL and AAR Annual Meetings will be held November 21-24 in Boston, Massachusetts. Registration and the Exhibit Hall will be located in the Hynes Convention Center. Academic sessions will be held in the Hynes Convention Center, Sheraton Boston, Marriott Copley, Hilton Back Bay, Fairmont Copley Place, and Boston Park Plaza. Registration and housing for the Annual Meeting will open in early April.

### **Questions about the Call**

The work of the Program Unit is coordinated by the Chair(s) and a Steering Committee who design the sessions and make the decisions about which proposals will eventually be on the program. Each proposal is carefully refereed, usually in an anonymous procedure (i.e., without the name of the proposer being provided to the referees). All proposals, abstracts, and completed participant information (as well as any questions you may have) should be sent to the individual(s) named in the Call; this occurs automatically in the Program, Evaluation, Review, and Submission (PAPERS) System. The deadline for proposal submission is **5:00 PM EST, Monday, March 2, 2020.**

Please inquire with the appropriate Program Unit Chair(s) about the amount of time granted for your presentation and by what date the respondent (if any) must receive your completed paper.

### **Guidelines for Submitting Proposals**

- **Step 1:** Find a topic in the general Call for Proposals or Call of a specific Program Unit that interests you.
- **Step 2:** Determine which type of proposal you wish to submit.
  - **Paper proposal** – A paper written by you (and possibly a co-author) that you will present in response to a theme within a Program Unit's Call.

- **Papers session proposal** – A proposal of a complete session of different papers on a theme, complete with its own description, abstract, a presider, paper presentations, and (optionally) a respondent. Presenters in a papers session must submit their proposals to the papers session organizer, who in turn is responsible for inputting them into the Program Administration Proposal, Evaluation, Review, and Submission (PAPERS) System.
  - **Roundtable session proposal** – A proposal of a complete session, including a presider, list of panelists, and (optionally) a respondent; all of whom will speak (*ex tempore*) on a common theme.
- **Step 3:** Write your 7,500-character proposal and 1,200-character abstract. Paper sessions require a separate 7,500-character proposal and 1,200-character abstract for each paper in the session. The abstracts will be listed in the *Online Program Book*.
  - **Step 4:** Submit your proposal via the method requested by the Program Unit no later than Monday, March 2. Most Program Units have elected to use the online PAPERS system only. A Participant Form is required for any proposal submitted outside for the online PAPERS system. Carefully note any audiovisual equipment you require before you submit your proposal.
    - **PAPERS:** Submit your 7,500-character proposal and 1,200-character abstract via the Program Administration Proposal, Evaluation, Review, and Submission (PAPERS) System. **NOTE: Do not place your name or other identifying remarks in the body of the proposal field or abstract field in PAPERS; this may endanger the anonymous review process of the Unit and acceptance of your proposal may be jeopardized.** Your name and contact information is sent automatically with the proposal so you do not have to submit a separate participant form. For help using the PAPERS system, please consult the PAPERS User Manual or if you still require assistance, email [support@aarweb.org](mailto:support@aarweb.org).
    - **Email:** Submit your 7,500-character proposal and 1,200-character abstract within the BODY of ONE single email to the contacts listed in the Program Unit's Call (usually the Chairs). Click [here](#) to open the Participants Form for E-mail Submission. Please be sure you use the exact same title on the Participant Form for E-mail Submissions as you do on the e-mailed proposal. Proposals received without the participant forms will be disqualified. If you are requested by the Program Unit to submit a copy to both co-Chairs or Steering Committee members, follow the instructions listed. If no one person is specified, send your complete proposal to either one of the co-chairs.
    - **E-mail with Attachments:** Submit your 7,500-character proposal, 1,200-character abstract, and Participant Form as attachments in one single e-mail to the contacts listed in the Program Unit's Call (usually the Chairs). Please click

here to open the Participant Form for E-mail Attachment Submission for your participant form. Be sure you use the exact same title on the Participant Form for E-mail Submission as you do on the attached proposal you email. Proposals received without the participant forms will be disqualified. Participant forms received without proposals or abstracts will also be disqualified.

- **Step 5:** Notification of your proposal's acceptance status for the Annual Meeting program will be sent by April 1, 2020.

### **Participation Requirements at the Annual Meeting**

Membership is not required to submit a proposal in response to the Call for Proposals. However, **all participants accepted to the program must be current (2020) AAR members and registered for the Annual Meeting by June 30, 2020.**

Participants may appear no more than two times in any capacity (e.g., paper presenter, panelist, presider, or respondent). The only exception is a business meeting presider.

A person can have only one role in a session. You cannot preside and present a paper in the same session.

People can submit no more than two proposals in response to the Call for Proposals. This includes submitting the same proposal to two separate Units or two different proposals to two different Units.

### **Wildcard Sessions**

Wildcard sessions are intended to be experimental, creative, or exploratory sessions that address an area of interest that does not naturally fall within the purview of an existing Program Unit. These sessions offer members direct access to the Annual Meeting program outside of the normal Program Unit structure.

### **Guidelines for Wildcard Sessions**

Wildcard sessions are accepted through PAPERS only.

Wildcard sessions must use one of the prearranged session proposal formats (papers session or roundtable).

Make sure the wildcard 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 as a Wildcard session and also to another Program Unit, it will be eliminated from consideration as a Wildcard. The Program Committee evaluates all Wildcard Session proposals. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by **April 1, 2020**.

## **Exploratory Sessions**

All proposals for new Units must begin as Exploratory Sessions. An exploratory session is 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 2, 2020**. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by **April 1, 2020**. Exploratory sessions that are accepted onto the program are then invited to submit an application for new Unit status by **December 11, 2020**.

## **Schedule for 2020**

### **Saturday, Sunday, and Monday**

9:00 am-11:30 am (2.5 hours)

1:00 pm-3:00 pm (2 hours)

3:30 pm-5:00 pm (90 minutes)

5:30 pm-7:00 pm (90 minutes)

### **Tuesday**

8:30 am-10:00 am (90 minutes)

10:30 am-12:00 pm (90 minutes)

The AAR encourages creative and innovative proposals for the shorter sessions. Some possibilities include: restricting a panel to two or three thirty-minute papers followed by discussion; posting papers in advance to focus on discussion rather than presentation; topical panel discussions; discussion of a book or film; a panel on teaching in the field; or work-shop style sessions. The ninety-minute format is perfect for hosting specialized conversations on an aspect of the field or “teaching” a topic to the audience.

## **Audiovisual Requests**

The AAR recognizes the importance of using digital equipment during presentations. A limited number of meeting rooms are supplied with LCD projectors for connecting to a personal laptop or tablet. Additionally, some rooms will have the capacity to amplify audio from a presenter's device. AAR encourages participants to bring or share a personal or departmental laptop or tablet to run any PowerPoint, CD, or DVD presentation. Free wifi access will be available in some properties, but for bandwidth-intensive applications, please request "Internet Access" in the Other: box in the PAPERS system. In order to ensure quality, video presentations should be downloaded to a native device and not streamed over the internet when possible. **All AV requests must be received at the time of the proposal. Late requests cannot be accommodated.** See the AAR Audiovisual Policy for more information.

## **Questions about the Annual Meeting**

Concerns of a general nature may be sent to [annualmeeting@aarweb.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aarweb.org).

## African Diaspora Religions Unit

### Call Text:

Moving and Centering the Body: Embodied Experiential Engagement in African Diaspora Religions

The African Diaspora Religions Unit, in recognition of our tenth anniversary and the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, embarks on a project of reframing the body in research and pedagogies of African Diaspora religious and theological studies. Although the past decade has been punctuated by heightened recognition of bodies, body troubles and bodies in trouble, religious and theological scholarship in western spaces are often hesitant to engage in deep critical inquiry of the body. Against the backdrop of a decade of body strife in social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental spaces and beyond, the African Diaspora Religions Unit endeavors a serious undertaking of the body, body knowledge and understanding of the body/bodies in the practice of religious and spiritual expression.

This call is guided by driving questions such as: How does the body/embodiment inform the knowing, knowledge, and processes of being-in-the-world of scholars-of-practice and practicing scholars in African Diaspora religions; in what ways do bodies create, generate, translate, and transmit knowledge; under what conditions are bodies the primary source of knowing? This call is for embodied experiential engagements - defined as bodies intentionally in motion and an epistemological stance whereby bodies are central articulations of knowing, knowledge, and pedagogy; the body as religious or theological enquiry and itself a theology.

### Format:

We are looking for short (20 - 30 minutes), medium (30 - 45 minutes,) and long (45 minutes plus) form embodied experiential encounters. Each Encounter should be organized to take participants through clear processes that include methodology and analysis. We are not looking for "papers" as such, but for scholar/practitioner/artist-led experiences that can be shared in an embodied way with participants. Experiences might include guided movement, dance, or music but are not limited to these. Experiences that center differently-abled B/being-ness as an aspect of Africana religious life are also welcome. The encounters should be framed to enable some time for collective reflection; an opportunity for participants to think through the takeaways of the experience.

### Detail:

In his 1997 publication *Worship as Body Language*, Elochukwu E. Uzukwu charts western disruption of the body's value in worship and society from the Graeco-Roman era to the late twentieth century, remarking that Christianity popularized the notion that the body is a "burden to self, a prison for the soul." The positioning of the body as separate from and antagonistic to the soul is counter to the worldview of African traditional cultures and belief systems, where the body and soul are indelibly intertwined, affirming a knowing that the "rhythm of interaction in this universe is discovered, recreated, and expressed bodily by humans." Two examples of this interaction come to us crossing the Middle Passage, in the Caribbean. Anansi/Legba/Eshu is a differently-abled deity whose crossroads identity (insect and human; male and female; able-bodied and disabled) transforms space and time in encounters

with the dead and the living and personifies untethered possibilities inside and beyond normative western structures. Also, Anna K. Perkins' work on Carnival and Dancehall culture focusses on the Christian religiosity in these celebratory spaces, which a western worldview assumes to be secular and/or profane. For Perkins, the bodily articulations of Caribbean spirituality are made visible in public rituals such as Carnival and Dancehall where participants not only "subvert ... negative Christian valuation of the body" but also "re-values bodies, especially colonised female bodies" (374). These are some of the examples we took as inspiration for our work of (re)centering the body.

**CO-SPONSORED SESSION:** African Diaspora Religions Unit, Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, Native Traditions in the Americas Unit, and Teaching Religion Unit

**Call for Papers: How to Teach Indigenous Religious Traditions**

Heeding Linda Tuhiwai Smith's call to center contemporary Indigenous politics, spiritual protocols, and authorship within research methodologies, this co-sponsored session will feature papers and demonstrations on teaching Indigenous religious traditions. Presenters will pre-circulate their pedagogical papers prior to the AAR meeting. Their written approach will be in close conversation with contemporary Indigenous methodologies, teachers, activists, writers, and intellectuals. At the 2020 AAR Boston session, panelists will speak for five minutes and then briefly demonstrate their approach to teaching specific Indigenous religious traditions.

**Mission Statement:**

Our Unit explores broad geographies, histories, and cultures of people of African descent and the way they shape the religious landscape, not only in the Caribbean and the Americas, but also in 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 an interdisciplinary approach which is central to its vision. The aim is 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, and Afro-Judaism, 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, and Asia.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Harding, Rachel E., University of Colorado, Denver, rachel.harding@ucdenver.edu

**Chair** - Jefferson-Tatum, Elana, Tufts University, elana.jefferson\_tatum@tufts.edu

## African Religions Unit

### Call Text:

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 2020 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:

#### Globality and Locality in African Religions

For centuries, global and local dynamics have shaped the varieties of religion in Africa. The movement of peoples, ideas, objects, among other things, within and outside the continent have had and continue to have an impact on people's religious beliefs and practices. The result has been a rich landscape of religious dynamism. What has been the nature of this impact and how have they shaped our understandings of religion in Africa? Papers in this panel will examine how African religions, on the continent and elsewhere, have responded to both local and global dynamics.

#### Teaching Religions in Africa

Teaching African religions – in all their diversity – brings its own challenges to the classroom. These challenges relate to the longstanding problem of othering and the history of (mis)representation of African societies and cultures, including their religious beliefs and practices, in the West; the contemporary politicisation of African religious traditions and identities both within Africa and beyond; the intricacies relating to power and positionality in knowledge production, and the limitations of academic categories, concepts and methodologies. This co-sponsored section will feature reflections on, and demonstrations of innovative pedagogical approaches, curriculum design, teaching practices, and textbook resources. (For a possible co-sponsorship with Teaching Religion.)

#### Religion and Popular Culture in Africa

Religion and popular culture are often seen as separate spheres, yet in African societies there is considerable overlap and fluidity between the two. Religious language, imagery, symbols and texts often shape, and are shaped by, the products and influences of contemporary mass culture in its various forms. Papers in this panel explore this productive relationship between religion and popular culture in African contexts. (For possible co-sponsorship with Religion and Popular Culture.)

#### Embodiment in African Religions

African religious cultures, both historically and to date, are intricately connected to embodiment. The body appears as a locus of self, spirit and divinity, and it mediates morality, belief, and experience. The embodied nature of African religions – indigenous religions,

Christianity, Islam and other traditions – calls into question longstanding Western dualisms such as of body and mind, spirit and matter, transcendence and immanence, ability and disability. Papers in this panel explore the complex and multifaceted ways in which religion and the body in African religions are intertwined. (For a possible co-sponsorship between the African Religions Unit and the Body and Religion Unit.)

**Mission Statement:**

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 study of the subject from a variety of schools of thought and methodological approaches, including but not limited to anthropology, history, history of religions, literary studies, sociology, and theology. The three major religious traditions under investigation are indigenous religions, Christianity and Islam, and the Group's leadership strives to create some balance in the attention paid to these three major traditions.

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

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - van Klinken, Adriaan, University of Leeds, [a.vanklinken@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:a.vanklinken@leeds.ac.uk)

**Chair** - Amponsah, David, University of Pennsylvania, [amda@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:amda@sas.upenn.edu)

## Afro-American Religious History Unit

### Call Text:

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 2020 Annual Meeting in Boston, we are especially interested in proposals that engage one or more of the following topics:

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

- Potential presenters should create proposals for five to seven minute presentations to enable ample time for discussion

African-American Religion and the Arts, specifically:

- Music, dance, and other performing arts

Rethorizations of the geographical and cultural boundaries of African-American Religion, specifically:

- African-Americans and Native American Religions/Afro-Native Religious Histories
- African-Americans in Anglophone, Hispanophone, and Francophone “America”
- African-American religion in the colonies and Early National Period

Theory and Method in the Study of African-American Religion, specifically:

- Black Religion and the Archive
- Redressing the historiographical dearth of women’s and LGBTQI+ religious histories

For a possible co-sponsorship with the Afro-American Religious History Unit/New Religious Movements Unit engaging alternative religious movements/cultures, including but not limited to:

- the anniversary of Daddy Grace and the United House of Prayer for All People (1919)
- African-Americans and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- African-American and Unitarianism/Transcendentalism

African-American Secularism and Freethinkers, including but not limited to:

- Black Humanism

Taking note of the proximity of the conference location to Salem, and for possible co-sponsorship with the North American Religions Unit, we invite proposals that take up witchcraft, magic, conjure, and/or related terms. In particular, we invite comparative reflection on these categories across time and space, and that consider these categories in relation to gender, ethnicity, class, and especially race.

The Unit is also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election. Persons interested in being considered for this panel should contact the Unit's co-chairs.

### Mission Statement:

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Wells-Oghoghomeh, Alexis S., Vanderbilt University, [alexis.s.wells@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:alexis.s.wells@vanderbilt.edu)

**Chair** - Shearer, Tobin, University of Montana, [tobin.shearer@umontana.edu](mailto:tobin.shearer@umontana.edu)

## **Animals and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This Unit addresses issues in the study of animals and religion and seeks to engage religion scholars with the emergent field of animal studies. We welcome theoretically informed paper and panel proposals on all topics related to these themes. We particularly value papers that attend to real animals, alongside theoretical constructs, imagery, or representations pertaining to them, and to intersectionality with key issues such as race, gender and disability. We especially seek proposals on the following topics in 2020:

- Animals, religion, and incarceration
- Queer/trans theory, religion, and animals
- Animals, religion, and the construction of whiteness
- The connections between animalization/dehumanization, genocide, and animal extinction

### **Mission Statement:**

The purpose of this Unit is to advance scholarship by providing a forum for scholars whose work addresses relevant issues in 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 images of nonhuman animals
- Assessments of relationships between religious constructions of animals and those animals

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Carter, Christopher, University of San Diego,** christophercarter@sandiego.edu

**Chair - Ambros, Barbara, University of North Carolina,** bambros@email.unc.edu

## **Anthropology of Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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:

- Ethnography Is, Ethnography Ain't. This theme critically engages the definition, practices, and boundaries of ethnography as a research methodology. We take inspiration from John L. Jackson's 2012 article by the same name, and encourage submissions that think alongside his contribution but are not constrained by it. For example, we are particularly interested in the ways in which anthropologists, religious studies scholars, and others mobilize ethnography differently (perhaps, divergently) and integrate ethnography with other methodologies (e.g., archival). We encourage co-sponsored submissions with the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit.
- Dirty and Dirtier. Exploring "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966) in religious life, the socio-historical conditions of naming the dirty, ideologies of dirt, regimes and practices of purifying, and the diverse sensory expressions of disorder (from interference and contagion to distortion, repugnance, pollution, and/or sensory foulness).
- Religion and Technology. Ethnographic and historical analyses that explore religion as technology and religion as mediated by technology. Papers might explore the world-making capacities of technology, ideologies of hyper-mediation and media erasure, and mobilizations of technology to shape the public presence of religion.
- Consuming the Past. How is the material culture of religion integral to practices of heritage-ization, remembering, erasure, nostalgia, and memorializing? Where do we encounter religious material culture from the past in the present?
- Non/areligion. What can anthropologists offer to expanding new scholarship on the non- or areligious? What theoretical lenses work best to situate these phenomena ethnographically?
- Place and Religious Performance. We encourage co-sponsored submissions with the Space, Place, and Religion Unit on this theme, namely papers that analyze the relationship between space, place and religious performance. Possible themes include without being limited to spatial analyses of the way the emplacement and movement of body(-ies) affect the places and spaces in which they perform; the way spaces and places foster or complicate ritual performance; performing arts in/creating/subverting sacred spaces; religious performances that traverse diverse spaces and places. Please contact Joy Palacios ([joy.palacios@ucalgary.ca](mailto:joy.palacios@ucalgary.ca)) with a short description of your proposal if interested in submitting.
- With the History of Christianity Unit, we invite co-sponsored papers and panels at the methodological crossroads of history and anthropology on the theme: "Of Pilgrimages and Objects: What History and Anthropology Can Learn Better Together." While the topic of "lived religion" has gained increasing currency in historical and ethnographic research, we seek to push the conversation further by identifying key elements of how concepts from the two disciplines find productive overlap in current research. Heeding to works such as Caroline Walker Bynum's *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*, we also

encourage papers that draw out insights of pre-modern religious cultures around pilgrimages and objects."

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

- Flash Formats. An increased number of presenters are allotted ~7 minutes, followed by a robust, guided discussion. One suggestion would be to choose a (number of) key term(s) in the anthropology of religion, to which panelists can respond.
- Sensory Props. Presenters engage with a material form that bears fieldwork significance, such as physical objects, visual images, and/or sound recordings.

**Mission Statement:**

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:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/AAR-Anthropology/info>

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Bielo, James, Miami University, bielojs@miamioh.edu

**Chair** - Selby, Jennifer A., Memorial University of Newfoundland, jselby@mun.ca

## **Arts Series**

### **Call Text:**

The AAR would especially like to highlight art and artists local to Boston. If you have a proposal for such an Arts Series event, please submit it as a Roundtable Session proposal, including a short description of the work to be displayed or performed. Please include links to websites where the art can be viewed (if possible). If you wish to have a panel discussion of the event, submit the names of those panelists as well. Finally, the proposal must include a detailed description of all necessary audiovisual or other needs and a detailed budget so that the AAR can adequately assess costs. Additionally, the AAR would like a letter of support from the chairs of a Program Unit willing to sponsor the Arts Series event (this will not count against their regular session allotment). The letter should be sent as an email to [annualmeeting@aarweb.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aarweb.org).

For any questions, please contact [annualmeeting@aarweb.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aarweb.org).

### **Mission Statement:**

The AAR strives to engage with religion and religious studies not only through the spoken or written word, but also through material, visual, and auditory culture. As such, we regularly sponsor two to three arts installations or performances at the Annual Meeting. These have ranged from musical, theatrical, and dance performances to art and photography displays.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Bauman, Whitney, Florida International University, [whitneyabauman@mac.com](mailto:whitneyabauman@mac.com)

**Chair** - Puckett, Robert N., American Academy of Religion, [rpuckett@aarweb.org](mailto:rpuckett@aarweb.org)

## **Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This year the Arts, Literature and Religion Unit solicits proposals for the following topics, but also welcomes proposals for any papers or preferably pre-formed panels related to any aspect of Arts, Literature and Religion:

1. Performing Religion: Theater and Dance. Contact [cialuna13@gmail.com](mailto:cialuna13@gmail.com)
2. U2 / Irish spirituality and popular music (co-sponsored with Religion and Music Unit). Contact [parrch@webster.edu](mailto:parrch@webster.edu)
3. Displaying Religion in Public: Boston Case Studies. Contact [splate@hamilton.edu](mailto:splate@hamilton.edu)
4. A) Transcendentalists, B) Pedagogy session, C) The Art, Literature and Religion of Videogames. Contact [nizhange@vt.edu](mailto:nizhange@vt.edu)
5. The relationships between art, literature, and religion in India and China. Contact [msa2b@virginia.edu](mailto:msa2b@virginia.edu)
6. The Pilgrims arrived in Massachusetts four hundred years ago, in 1620. We welcome proposals that explore the artistic, literary, and religious dimensions of that arrival, with particular interest in papers that focus on the experience of indigenous peoples during and after this encounter. Contact [mpotts@hds.harvard.edu](mailto:mpotts@hds.harvard.edu)
7. “The (After)lives of Religion and Literature”—Despite its declared demise, interest in the intersections of the literary and the study of religion is having a renaissance. What accounts for this recent development and what are its key thematics? How has the relationship between religious and literary studies been configured in different historical and cultural/religious contexts? What does it herald for notions of truth, credibility, critique, secularity, and fiction? For various practices of reading, the circulation of texts, and the shuffling of authoritative and vernacular genres? For possible co-sponsorship with the Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit. Contact [nizhange@vt.edu](mailto:nizhange@vt.edu)
8. Literary Representations of Exile: Keeping in mind Edward Said’s definition of exile as “the unhealable rift force between a human being and a native place,” this panel will explore literary and artistic works in which the experience of geographical displacement is rendered in religious terms. We welcome proposals dealing with all religious traditions and historical periods. Discussions may also involve, without being limited to, issues of race, politics, and identity. Contact [GHernandez@wcupa.edu](mailto:GHernandez@wcupa.edu).
9. Expressions of religion in post-communist countries: Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, this panel will discuss the ways in which religion, coined by Karl Marx as “the opium of the people,” finds expression in twenty-first century artistic and literary works produced in post-communist or post-socialist countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America. Proposals may address all forms of art, literature, media, and performance. Contact [GHernandez@wcupa.edu](mailto:GHernandez@wcupa.edu).
10. Bodies as Art. This call seeks papers that discuss bodies to be a medium for artistic expression in different religions and regions. In other words, bodies narrate and negotiate. Papers can employ any theoretical framework to discuss bodies as art. Contact [george.pati@valpo.edu](mailto:george.pati@valpo.edu)
11. Religion, Literature and the City in South Asia (potential 3-way co-sponsorship with the

Space, Place and Religion Unit and the Religion in South Asia Unit). The panel explores the various ways in which religions in urban South Asia are (re)presented in modern literature, particularly regarding spatiality, representations of space, space as an agent in modern urban life. Contact [Istvan.Keul@uib.no](mailto:Istvan.Keul@uib.no)

12. Screening the End: Wastelands, Doomsdays, and Ecological Collapse in Film and Literature. In so far as the apocalyptic event is an unveiling or moment of revelation (ἀποκάλυψις), this panel seeks papers that consider moments of revelation, rupture, and obfuscation in apocalyptic media. What is screened; what remains veiled; and what is uncovered in literary and filmic depictions of the apocalypse? Contact [caleb\\_murray@brown.edu](mailto:caleb_murray@brown.edu)

13. Meet the Artist. Contact [pwinfield@elon.edu](mailto:pwinfield@elon.edu)

14. Meet the Author. Contact [pwinfield@elon.edu](mailto:pwinfield@elon.edu)

15. Open Call

#### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

#### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

#### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Winfield**, Pamela D., Elon University, [pwinfield@elon.edu](mailto:pwinfield@elon.edu)

**Chair - Ni, Zhange**, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, [nizhange@vt.edu](mailto:nizhange@vt.edu)

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

### **Call Text:**

*Diversity is a core value of the ANARCS Unit. For this reason, we encourage organizers of pre-formed panels to invite participants that are diverse in regard to ethnicity, religion, gender, and professional status. In addition, we especially welcome proposals that focus on communities that have been historically underrepresented, including Southeast Asian, South Asian, Pacific Islander, and non-Christian communities.*

- New publications in the study of Asian/Pacific Islander American religion. In particular, we invite proposals for sessions that bring multiple publications into conversation with one another and that initiate conversation about significant new thematic, theoretical, and methodological developments in the field of A/PIA religion.
- New religious developments in A/PIA religious life. Proposals for sessions addressing this aspect of the CFP may address the emergence of new religious communities, institutions, beliefs and theologies, practices, and more.
- A/PIA religious life and its connection to political engagement and community activism. Proposals for sessions might consider, for example, A/PIA religious involvement in electoral politics, the U.S. census, the protests at Mauna Kea, and other forms of protest and political activity.

### *Two more possibilities:*

The Unit is also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election. [Persons interested in being considered for this panel should contact the Unit's co-chairs.]

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, the Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, the Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, we welcome proposals on the topic of "the Labor of Black, Brown, Yellow, and Indigenous Racialized Bodies in/and U.S. Religious Traditions." Proposals may address the following or related questions:

- How does the concept of labor, with its multiple connotations of both economic production and social reproduction, offer a useful way to make sense of black, brown, yellow, and indigenous racialized bodies' participation in U.S. religious traditions?
- What distinct kinds of labor have brown, indigenous, yellow, or black racialized people been expected to perform in our own religious communities and/or in predominantly white religious communities?
- How has labor (productive and/or reproductive) been a site for religious expression and/or resistance to oppression by indigenous, yellow, black, or brown racialized bodies?
- How have labor hierarchies and the labor of subordinated racial groups been sacralized?
- How is the religious labor of yellow, black, indigenous or brown racialized people further unequalized by hierarchies of gender and sexuality?

Historical, ethnographic, sociological, theological, and critical theory methods are all welcome.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**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:**

**Chair - Borja, Melissa**, University of Michigan, [mborja@umich.edu](mailto:mborja@umich.edu)

**Chair - Koh, SueJeanne**, University of California, Irvine, [sj.koh@uci.edu](mailto:sj.koh@uci.edu)

## **Augustine and Augustinianisms Unit**

### **Call Text:**

- Augustine and Christian Theologies of Jewish Protections

The Roman Empire had a legal tradition supplying minimal protections to safeguard Jews from the worst forms of persecution (including genocide). In her *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism*, Paula Fredriksen documented in great detail how Augustine constructed a theological reasoning that maintained Jewish protections in the West for 800 some years. Papers are, first of all, invited from all disciplines employing a wide range of methodologies to examine what resources are available either in Augustine or his later interpreters to ensure Jewish flourishing. Papers are also welcomed on the limits and shortcomings of the Augustinian tradition in this regard and about times in which his theological reasoning failed to persuade or protect. Paula Fredriksen will respond to accepted papers and reflect upon her work a decade after its appearance.

- James K. A. Smith on Augustine in the 21st Century

Co-Sponsored Session with SBL Contextualizing North African Christianity Unit. An interview with James K. A. Smith on the questions raised by his bestselling *On the Road with Saint Augustine: A Real-World Spirituality for Restless Hearts* (Brazos, 2019). Smith takes Augustine as his guide to problems that perplexed Augustine and still challenge us such as ambition, sex, friendship, faith, freedom, justice, parenting, and death. While explaining his own journey in the footsteps of Augustine, Smith will also explore further how others may do the same in our time. Papers are not invited for this session.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides a forum for the historical and constructive study of issues relating to the thought of Augustine, including how it was received in various eras and how it might be a resource for religious thought today.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Kolbet, Paul R., Yale University, kolbet@aya.yale.edu**

**Chair - Drever, Matthew, University of Tulsa, matthew-drever@utulsa.edu**

## Baha'i Studies Unit

### Call Text:

#### Changing Identities in a Global Society

In communities and nations around the world, peoples and groups struggle to define themselves and their place in the world; the surge in ethnic nationalism sweeping across Western societies brings renewed salience to questions of identity. Countless permutations of “us” and “them” are splintering identities, accelerating the rise of divergent interest groups, and making it more and more difficult to foster social cohesion. The question of human identity has been at the core of religious teachings and takes on renewed salience when efforts are made to reconcile tensions between bounded social identities on the one hand and a recognition of the interdependence and oneness of the human race on the other. The Baha'i Studies Unit will explore the ways in which religious communities and diverse theologies grapple with the tensions between the particular and the universal in the construction of human identity. We welcome papers that explore the following:

1. How do religious traditions address the tensions between the particular and the universal? In what ways do various traditions, theologies, and accompanying practices support the flourishing of diversity while fostering a consciousness of belonging to the human race?
2. How do religious traditions re-imagine local, national, or regional identities in a way that enables the above-mentioned tensions to be resolved?
3. What is the spiritual basis of our shared human identity? How do we reconcile the recognition of our secondary identities (e.g. gender, ethnicity, nationality) with our primary human identity?
4. How does the construction of a global identity shape the understanding and practice of gender equality, education, governance, international development, among others?
5. How does the core tenet of the Baha'i Faith, the principle of the oneness of humankind, and its embodiment in the practices of the Baha'i community address itself to the exigencies and challenges of present-day social fragmentation?

### Mission Statement:

The Bahá'í Studies Unit is devoted to the study of the Bahá'í religion in all its aspects: history, lives of its primary figures and their missions, sacred and authoritative texts, scholarly and popular literature, teachings, practices, expressions in art and social action, its public discourse, growth, issues of minorities within it, and its local and national communities, both as these aspects exist today and how the understanding of them has evolved over time. It studies these aspects using the scholarly tools available, but is particularly interested in interdisciplinary approaches and integrated paradigms of scholarship. It seeks dialogue with researchers of

other faith traditions and comparative research involving the Bahá'í Faith and other religious communities.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Berger, Julia, Baha'i International Community, [jberger@bic.org](mailto:jberger@bic.org)

**Chair** - Stockman, Robert H., Indiana University, South Bend, [rstockman@usbnc.org](mailto:rstockman@usbnc.org)

## Bioethics and Religion Unit

### Call Text:

"Inclusion, Intersections, and Intersectionalities"

Bioethics crosses the concerns of many patient and people groups, various healthcare experiences from medical research to clinical care from birth to death, as well as diverse definitions of religion, religious experience, and religious activity. Nearly twenty years ago, Catherine Myser challenged scholars in the field in her argument that "there has been inadequate attention to and questioning of the dominance and normativity of whiteness in the cultural construction of bioethics in the United States. Therefore we risk reproducing white privilege and white supremacy in its theory, method, and practices." Consistent with the President's 2020 theme that asks for attention to matters in the guild such as "changes in the religions we study; the methods we use to study them; the demographics of our membership; the way we teach; [and] the mediums through which we disseminate our research, this call invites papers that intentionally seek to extend the scope of the field of bioethics and religion by demonstrating its diversities in theorists, methodologies, topics, and practices. Diverse approaches to the call include, but are not limited to: moving beyond principlism, pedagogy of bioethics through the creative arts, bioethics and immigration, and communicating bioethical topics through a short film.

Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Co-sponsored with Bioethics and Religion Unit and Religion and the Social Sciences

"Religion, Race, and the Embodied Health and Well-Being of Black Women: Bioethics and Womanist Perspectives"

From their arrival in the New World, the bodies of African diasporan women have been an embattled space of abuse, disrespect, and egregious experimentation often perpetrated by socio-economics, from colonial enslavement through contemporary mass incarceration; giving birth in the fields and working moments later, with infants ripped from their hands and simultaneously forced to be wet nurses for white babies. Such behavior, steeped in exploitative economics that totally disregarded black women's personhood had a significant impact on moral, ethical, legal, medical, religious, sociopolitical, scientific, and sociological systems in the United States. The impact on African American women's embodied lives is vast, from issues of physical and mental health; reproductive justice (forced hysterectomies, sterilization, maternal and infant mortality) to stigmatized health care, biased health and health care policies, technology, body enhancement; environmental injustice, to inequitable health, regardless of class including lesser access to health care and health insurance. Much conversation is emerging around the intersectionalities of Black women's lived experiences, and our scholarship, including topics of interests and methodologies. This session invites papers addressing any of these topics and areas related to all aspects of Black women's embodied health. Social scientific theories and methods in religious studies and applied ethics are welcome.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

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

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

## **Black Theology Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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. This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first systematic articulation of liberation theology in North America. In *A Black Theology of Liberation*, James Cone puts forth the sources and norms of black liberation theology and articulates its contents in doctrinal form. In this call for papers, we invite submissions that explore the contemporary meaning of liberation in black theological discourse through topics such as:

Black Theology and decolonial (anti-colonial) methods

Black Theology, reparations and settler colonialism

Black Theology, Black Socialism and Anti-colonial movements

Black Theology and the Palestinian struggle

Black Theology and mass incarceration

Black Theology and Indigenous Healing

Black Theology as Ecotheology

Black Theology, electoral politics and public life

Race, bioethics and reproductive technologies

We also invite papers that address:

Howard Thurman and contemplative practices

The Nation of Islam and Malcolm X's influence on the formation of Black Theology  
and

The Future of Black Theology: Where do we go from here?

A) What direction should black theology go in a post-Conian world?

B) On what grounds does black theology stand?

What are the methodological differences between black theology, black religious studies and black church studies?

Recalling that when Martin Luther King Jr. was a doctoral student at Boston University, Howard Thurman was Dean of Marsh Chapel at BU, as the AAR returns to Boston in 2020, we finally invite papers, for a co-sponsored session with the Martin Luther King Jr. Unit, that explore the life and thought of Martin Luther King Jr and Howard Thurman around the themes of spirituality and social transformation; the contributions of Coretta Scott King; as well as consideration of women and the Black Social Gospel.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit seeks to further develop Black theology as an academic enterprise. In part, this is accomplished by providing opportunities for exchanges related to basic issues 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

Proposals have a much greater chance of acceptance if they make clear the central thesis and main line(s) of argument of the proposed paper.

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Clark, Jawanza Eric, Manhattan College, jawanza.clark@manhattan.edu

**Chair** - Marshall Turman, Eboni, Yale University, eboni\_marshall-turman@yale.edu

## **Body and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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. We invite proposals or panels presenting diverse methodologies and understandings of the body, as well as traditional and alternative presentation styles. 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 particularly interested in proposals on the following topics:

(1) neoliberal or capitalist bodies in religious contexts, (2) the role of bodily senses in religion, (3) analyzing religious bodies using the work of Frantz Fanon, (4) immigrant and/or itinerant bodies, (5) bodies in artificial intelligence, games and/or virtual realities, (6) embodiment in African Religions (co-sponsored with the African Religions Unit), and (7) open call.

In addition, the Body and Religion Unit seeks proposals for an interactive author(s)-respondent(s) book panel on one of the following books: *Valuing Lives, Healing Earth* (Dube, Hinga, et. al.; *Jezebel Unhinged* (Lomax) or *Ezili's Mirrors* (Tinsley). The focus of the proposal should highlight the embodied religious aspects in one of these texts.

For further contextualization on our shared call for proposals on Embodiment in African Religions (co-sponsored with the African Religions Unit): African religious cultures, both historically and to date, are intricately connected to embodiment. The body appears as a locus of self, spirit and divinity, and it mediates morality, belief, and experience. The embodied nature of African religions – indigenous religions, Christianity, Islam and other traditions – calls into question longstanding Western dualisms such as of body and mind, spirit and matter, transcendence and immanence. Papers in this panel explore the complex and multifaceted ways in which religion and the body in African religions are intertwined.

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.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

### *Listserv*

The Body and Religion Unit maintains a listserv for announcements about conferences, new publications and other items relevant to the field. To subscribe (or for other listserv

information) go to <http://aarlists.org/bodyreligion> and fill out the online form. Once subscribed you will be able to receive messages, control your subscription options, and access the archives.

- Subscription is open.
- The list of subscribers is private. The Body and Religion Unit does not share the list with anyone.
- Anyone can post messages directly. If you have a new publication, a conference, a workshop or other announcement relevant to the study of body and religion that you want to share, you can write a message to [bodyreligion@aarlists.org](mailto:bodyreligion@aarlists.org).
- Traffic is low on this listserv.

#### *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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

#### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

#### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Zubko, Katherine C., University of North Carolina, Asheville, kzubko@unca.edu

**Chair** - Sijapati, Megan Adamson, Gettysburg College, msijapat@gettysburg.edu

## **Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The “Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis” Group invites paper proposals on themes related to Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s life, theology and legacy. As 2020 represents the eightieth anniversary of the crucial year 1940, we invite proposals related to any of Bonhoeffer’s writings or activities of that year, including the closing of the “collective pastorates,” the publication of *Psalms: The Prayerbook of the Bible*, (for a possible co-sponsored session with the SBL’s Book of Psalms Section), his residence at the Benedictine monastery at Ettal, and his work on *Ethics*. We also invite papers or panels on truth-telling, Bonhoeffer as resistor, and teaching Bonhoeffer in turbulent times. Other topics will be considered as well. Please indicate your willingness to engage in interactive sessions or panels by (for example) submitting a manuscript in advance, delivering a paper summary, and engaging in extended QandA, using high-engagement pedagogical strategies to present material to the audience, and/or, incorporating visual aids (AV and/or hand-outs) in your presentation.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Hale, Lori Brandt, Augsburg University, hale@augsburg.edu

**Chair** - Haynes, Stephen R., Rhodes College, haynes@rhodes.edu

## **Buddhism in the West Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Buddhism in the West Unit seeks to provide a venue for new scholarship on Buddhsims in non-Asian locations and to explore critical methodologies in such studies. The Unit invites individual papers or panel proposals on the following topics (but is open to other possibilities):

#### **Western Buddhism as Scholarly Field:**

Inspired by the 2020 AAR Theme (“The AAR as a Scholarly Guild”), the Unit invites proposals reflecting on the development of studies on Buddhism outside Asia. In particular, we encourage panel proposals considering theories and methods in the field, and the contributions that studies of Buddhism outside Asia have made to Buddhist studies or religious studies more broadly.

#### **Reclaiming Voices:**

The Unit invites proposals that foreground under-studied forms of Buddhism in the West; we are particularly interested in papers examining marginalized communities (e.g., refugees) or groups, as well as underutilized theories or frames, such as class analysis; urban studies; feminist, womanist, and/or queer theories, etc.

#### **Deconstructing Dichotomies:**

The Unit invites proposals that would theorize or deconstruct existing dichotomies and assumptions in the field, such as the distinctions between east/west, north/south, national/transnational, and so forth.

#### **Western Buddhism and Land Use:**

How are Buddhist communities reacting to climate change, especially in relation to devastating wildfires in California and Australia?

#### **Buddhism and xenophobia:**

For possible co-sponsorship with the Buddhism Unit, an exploration of how Buddhism is being used in xenophobic discourses globally.

#### **Books Under Discussion:**

The Unit will accept proposals for author-meets-critic panels or roundtables on new titles in the field.

### **Mission Statement:**

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

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Hickey, Wakoh Shannon, Notre Dame of Maryland University,  
[wakohshannon@icloud.com](mailto:wakohshannon@icloud.com)

**Chair** - Mitchell, Scott, Institute of Buddhist Studies, [scott@shin-ibs.edu](mailto:scott@shin-ibs.edu)

## Buddhism Unit

### Call Text:

The Buddhism Unit welcomes proposals for papers sessions, individual papers, and roundtables 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 gender, rank, institutions, etc. WISAR (<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/>) is an excellent resource for ensuring gender balance.

This year, we again ask you to keep in mind the possible session allotments, which are as follows (we will choose either Option A or Option B after we evaluate the proposals that come in):

(Option A) Two 2.5-hour sessions, one 2-hour session, and three 90-minute sessions

(Option B) One 2.5-hour session, one 2-hour session, and five 90-minute sessions

(with either option) One additional 90-minute session through co-sponsorship with another Unit

We invite proposals for 2.5-hour sessions, 2-hour sessions, and 90-minute sessions. Both options, however, reflect a trend within AAR toward a larger number of shorter sessions. Please keep this in mind in formulating your proposals. As always, we encourage new and innovative formats. Please do not submit a paper as both an Individual Paper Proposal and as part of a Papers Session Proposal. We will consider papers submitted as part of a Papers Session Proposal for potential inclusion in an omnibus session of individual papers.

We especially welcome proposals on this year's Presidential Theme: "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild," which was proposed by the AAR President and member of the Unit, Prof. Jose Cabezon.

Below are some of the themes that our members have proposed for the 2020 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.

-Buddhist Apologetics—Contact: Kendall Marchman (University of Georgia): [kendallmarchman@uga.edu](mailto:kendallmarchman@uga.edu)

This panel engages Buddhist apologetic literature throughout the Buddhist world, past and present. Apologetics inform us about the common critiques of Buddhist beliefs and practices, the surrounding milieu in which these texts were produced, and the responses Buddhists used to defend themselves.

-Buddhists Count—Contact: Alex Hsu (University of Notre Dame): [ahsu@nd.edu](mailto:ahsu@nd.edu)  
Buddhist literatures of every genre are rife with numbers. Buddhists count elements,

arguments, sects, steps in a ritual, breaths, precepts, scriptures, beads, worlds, beings, distance, and the passage of time in the tens and thousands, or sometimes items are "beyond measure." Why do they do this? What units do they use? What happens when the numbers don't add up, or multiple witnesses offer differing accounts? Are there quintessentially Buddhist ways of enumerating, measuring, or scaling things? What mathematical skills do Buddhist texts cultivate in their readers? What facilities with numbers do Buddhist institutions presume of their members? And what, if anything, should scholars of Buddhism be counting next? Historical, philological, literary, philosophical, ethnographic, social-theoretical approaches all welcome. Depending on panelists we could co-sponsor with the Buddhist Philosophy Unit.

-Book panel on *Buddhist Tourism in Asia*, ed. Courtney Bruntz and Brooke Schedneck (University of Hawaii Press, 2020), possibly co-sponsored with Space, Place, and Religion Unit—Contact: Brooke Schedneck (Rhodes College): [schedneckb@rhodes.edu](mailto:schedneckb@rhodes.edu)

-Emic Perspectives on the Category "Buddhism"—Contact: Nicole Willock (Old Dominion University): [nwillock@odu.edu](mailto:nwillock@odu.edu) or Eric Haynie (University of Michigan): [ehaynie@umich.edu](mailto:ehaynie@umich.edu) How do Buddhists define their tradition? This panel would be a critical reflection on the usages of "Buddhism" as a category. It might include papers that examine how Buddhist writers and scholars identify, define, or characterize "Buddhism." These could be analyses of material from different historical periods and within different geographic or sectarian traditions. Collectively, this panel would engage with accounts of emic Buddhist knowledge production as a way of complicating "Buddhism" in the scholarly guild. We are looking for other people to participate in the discussion. Depending on who would like to contribute, this might be a great option for a roundtable discussion.

-Whose Sages? Chinese Arguments about the Buddha, Laozi, and Confucius—Contact: Elizabeth Morrison (Middlebury): [emorriso@middlebury.edu](mailto:emorriso@middlebury.edu)

This panel will take up the long history of Chinese arguments about who is a sage, how various sages are to be ranked, regarded as identical or complementary in their teachings.

-One Size Doesn't Fit All: Tailoring Buddhist Teachings to Laypeople—Contact: Alan Wagner (CRCAO, CNRS/College de France): [awagner@post.harvard.edu](mailto:awagner@post.harvard.edu)

This panel brings together perspectives which see beyond the simple division of Buddhist communities into monastic and lay spheres. In late medieval China, in particular, we find several examples of prominent Buddhist teachers who not only wrote for a lay audience, but tailored their teachings to different classes of laypeople. Rather than treating the laity as a homogenous group, such writers see that differences of age, gender, profession, and social class have important impacts on people's religious needs and on the kinds of practice and teaching that are most appropriate for each group. Nuanced views of the lay population illuminate distinctions in Buddhists' understandings of karma, "cultivation", paths to liberation, precepts and "skillful means" as these apply to the realities of daily worldly life. This panel welcomes comparative perspectives, both modern and premodern, from across the Buddhist world which show similar attention to the diversity of the lay community and their needs.

-The Pre-History of Socially Engaged Buddhism—Contact: Jessica Zu (Princeton University): [xzu@princeton.edu](mailto:xzu@princeton.edu)

This panel examines transnational trends of integrating Buddhism and activism as well as the

concomitant doctrinal innovations to reorient Buddhist theory and practice of liberation for collective transformation. In so doing, this panel seeks to go beyond the received wisdom of socially engaged Buddhism as a moral judgement to praise Buddhist communities that promote liberal democratic values and to denounce Buddhist communities that incite ethnic cleansing or justify collective violence. By taking seriously socially engaged Buddhism as an analytic category, the studies in this panel seek to map out diverse thought and movements that had contributed to the birth of socially engaged Buddhism in the 1967 moment when Thich Nhat Hanh met Dr. Martin Luther King.

-Innovation, Adaptation, and Inclusion in Modern Buddhist Monastic Education—Contact: Manuel Lopez (New College of Florida): [mlopezzafra@ncf.edu](mailto:mlopezzafra@ncf.edu)

The main goal of this panel is to explore the various ways in which monastic education and, in particular, monastic curricula are changing in order to adapt to the current historical, social, and political environment throughout the Buddhist world. In order to offer a comprehensive and inclusive view of those changes, the panel will ideally include scholars who have recently done fieldwork in various Buddhist countries, while collectively covering the three largest Buddhist traditions (Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna). The panel will also ask questions and try to offer answers to some of the most important challenges faced by contemporary Buddhism as reflected in the current changes to monastic curricula throughout the Buddhist world; among them, how has the universalization of secular education in Buddhist countries affected the contents and the pedagogical approaches in monasteries? How are relatively new alternative institutions, like the Seminary in China, challenging the centrality of the monastery in the Buddhist world? How are various Buddhist countries negotiating a more inclusive educational environment for nuns? And finally, what are the dangers and opportunities faced by monastic institutions when negotiating those changes?

-Privilege in Buddhist History—Contact: Alison Melnick Dyer (Bates College): [amelnick@bates.edu](mailto:amelnick@bates.edu)

We are interested in developing our conversation about how privilege has influenced Buddhist institutions prior to the contemporary moment.

-Buddhist Kingship in Practice—Contact: Ian MacCormack (UC Berkeley): [ijm@berkeley.edu](mailto:ijm@berkeley.edu)  
This session will compare specific cases of enthronement, funerary rites, royal processions, etc. from across the Buddhist world. What role do these practices play in constituting the royal person, the relationship between ruler and subjects, core-periphery relations, ideals of perfection, and so on? Papers that connect particular evidence with general observations about kingship and the study of Buddhism are especially welcome.

-Goddess Reverence in Buddhist Traditions—Contact: Hillary Langberg (Bard College): [hlangberg@bard.edu](mailto:hlangberg@bard.edu)

From divine female Bodhisattvas in Indic Sanskrit texts to goddess veneration in Japanese Buddhist temples today, this panel investigates the developments, roles, and functions of goddesses in Buddhism. Papers may span any time period, region, and form of evidence (ethnographic, textual, visual, and/or spatial).

- New guiding questions and methods in Buddhist Studies—Contact: Liz Wilson (Miami University of Ohio): [wilsone@miamioh.edu](mailto:wilsone@miamioh.edu)

How is scholarship in the field changing in response to new guiding questions? This session will bring together scholars who give pride of place to categories such as race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Participants will reflect on how privilege grounded in these categories has influenced the institutions we study. The panel will also engage in self-reflexive analysis, asking how privilege configures the institutions that we work for and our work as scholars. Are there raced and gendered networks that contribute to the academic reward system in our fields and locations? If our institutions are shaped by power inequities, are there ways that we can reconfigure our institutions to bring greater fairness?

-Buddhism and xenophobia—For possible co-sponsorship with the Buddhism in the West Unit, an exploration of how Buddhism is being used in xenophobic discourses globally.

-The Business of Asceticism during the Long 1st Millennium CE— Please contact Matthew Milligan (Trinity University), mattdmilligan@gmail.com or Nicholas Witkowski ( Nanyang Technological University, Singapore), nwitkows@alumni.stanford.edu

The study of Buddhism in Asia has long been overdetermined by a debate set into motion long ago by Protestant and Catholic theologians over the proper role of the ascetic in religion and society. Weber, for example, argued that the deeply ascetic focus on the body, characteristic of Catholicism, was inherently antithetical to the economic focus of Protestant inner-asceticism on capital accumulation. The classic version of this assertion in academia is the claim that Buddhism is a religion of the “middle way,” a view that claims another-worldly bodily asceticism was antithetical to the this-worldly Buddhist mainstream focus on the economics of institution-building. Scholars such as Gregory Schopen have argued that Buddhism is not about bodily asceticism, but is really a business. Rather than viewing bodily asceticism and the pragmatics of the monastic economy as mutually exclusive modes of inquiry, this panel will be devoted to bringing these two discursive strands together, looking to examine whether we can discover a business of asceticism in the monastery. This panel is looking for papers that bring the themes of monastic economy and ascetic practice into dialogue.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit is the largest, most stable, 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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Ohnuma, Reiko, Dartmouth College, [reiko.ohnuma@dartmouth.edu](mailto:reiko.ohnuma@dartmouth.edu)

**Chair** - Lowe, Bryan, Princeton University, [bdlowe@princeton.edu](mailto:bdlowe@princeton.edu)

## **Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Group 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.). We invite paper or panel proposals on the following topics as they pertain to our mission to engage in Buddhist critical and constructive reflection. Please note that in 2020 we will again particularly invest in the roundtable format so as to enhance discussion.

- (1) Roundtable discussion on efforts to address sexual misconduct in Buddhist monastic contexts;
- (2) Buddhist responses to apocalypse—climate emergency, nationalist violence, etc.;
- (3) Racism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, and transphobia in non-Western contexts, and the strategies/pedagogies to address them;
- (4) Intersectional wisdom: How can the Buddha dharma be expanded/enriched/revalorized with womanism, critical race theory, queer theory, trans\* theory, and perspectives of the subaltern in general;
- (5) Liberation through life-stories;
- (6) Trauma-informed Buddhist teachings;
- (7) How the Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit has changed since its inception.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.).

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Hu, Hsiao-Lan, University of Detroit Mercy, hhu@udmercy.edu**

**Chair - Brown, Sid, University of the South, sbrown@sewanee.edu**

## Buddhist Philosophy Unit

### Call Text:

The Buddhist Philosophy Unit (BPU) sponsors sessions that focus on specific philosophical topics, methodological issues, (a) recent publication(s) in the field (books, papers, etc.) or a classical text of particular importance. Sessions representing a diversity of methods to address a regionally-defined topic are also encouraged.

The BPU considers individual paper proposals, but mostly encourages thematically integrated panels. The BPU has a particular interest in panels that include graduate students and junior scholars as well as proposals that would be suitable for co-sponsorship with another Unit. If proposing the latter, please provide suggestions for co-sponsorship when you submit your proposal.

The allocation of sessions for the Buddhist Philosophy Unit is either: A) One 2.5-hour and one 2-hour session; or B) One 2.5-hour and two 90-minute sessions. The choice of which option to use will be dictated by the number and types of panel proposals received. Either allocation allows an additional 90-minute session to be listed if co-sponsorship is secured.

During the recent annual meeting of the AAR the topics listed below were proposed. If you are interested in contributing to or coordinating a panel on one of these topics, please contact the person listed. You are also welcome to propose a panel or paper on any topic within the purview described above.

**Topic:** Round-table on Buddhist Philosophy and Philosophy Departments: Training Students, Hiring, Teaching

**Contact:** Pierre-Julien Harter [pjharter@unm.edu](mailto:pjharter@unm.edu) and Emily McCrea [emcrae@unm.edu](mailto:emcrae@unm.edu)

**Description:** This round-table encourages us to think beyond the well-known problem of eurocentrism in philosophy departments to offer constructive and critical perspectives on training students to be hired by philosophy departments. We will discuss ways that programs in Religious Studies can better prepare their students to become competitive candidates for job offers in philosophy departments. The round-table focuses on the professional aspects of this issue rather than pedagogical or ideological ones. We are looking for people who can jump-start the conversation by proposing two strategies, one short-term and one long-term, to help students prepare for jobs in Philosophy Departments. We are not interested in participants reading papers, rather we invite participants to submit one short paragraph explaining their strategies. We encourage shorter presentations so that we can prioritize discussion among all those present.

**Topic:** Responses to Douglas Duckworth's Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy of Mind And Nature

**Contact:** Davey Tomlinson [david.tomlinson@villanova.edu](mailto:david.tomlinson@villanova.edu)

**Description:** Douglas Duckworth's recent book, *Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy of Mind and Nature*, discusses different streams of Tibetan philosophy that came into creative tension in

their distinct approaches to the meanings and functions of Indian Buddhist concepts and practices. Scholars of Buddhism are invited to respond to Duckworth's book by exploring issues it raises for them in their own areas of Buddhist thought and culture.

Topic: Book Panel on Roy Tzohar's *A Yogācāra Buddhist Theory of Metaphor*

Contact: Joy Brennan [brennanj@kenyon.edu](mailto:brennanj@kenyon.edu)

Description: This panel will consist of discussion and assessment of Tzohar's publication, out from Oxford University Press in 2018 and 2018 winner of the Toshihide Numata Book Award. The panelists will focus not only on assessing the philosophical implications of what Tzohar refers to as Sthiramati's pan-metaphorical theory of meaning, in which all language use is understood as metaphor, but will also include discussions of other important features of the book, including but not limited to its emphasis on the importance of cross-sectarian study of concepts in South Asian thought, its interpretation of a Yogācāra theory of inter-subjectivity, its interpretation of the importance of the concept of subsequent pure mundane awareness, its proposal of and resolution to the problem of incommensurability between awakened and ordinary beings, and its new way of thinking about the meaning of mind-only.

Topic: Mind-Body Philosophy

Contact: Naomi Worth [naomi@virginia.edu](mailto:naomi@virginia.edu)

Description: While Buddhist thought systems are typically seen as advocating oneness of mind and body, there are several intriguing alternatives to the Cartesian legacy of dualism from fields such as Buddhist medicine, Tantric physiology, Abhidharma, and so on. This panel brings together Buddhist philosophies on the relationship between consciousness or mind and the body. Recognizing that what is dualistic on one level may be held as inseparable or monistic on another, we invite an analysis of that tension. Papers might examine traditional and ancient systems as well as modern ones, and could invoke theoretical lenses that engage in discourse with contemporary philosophy.

Topic: Buddhist Philosophies of the Material

Contact: James Gentry [jdgentry@stanford.edu](mailto:jdgentry@stanford.edu)

Description: This panel sets out to expand the boundaries of the Buddhist Studies philosophical canon by considering how Buddhist thinkers have reflected philosophically on the roles of material objects (relics, amulets, pills, statues, stūpas, places...) in Buddhist theory and practice. Papers will ideally feature Buddhist philosophical treatments of issues such as human/non-human/object/environment relations, diverse non-human agencies, extended or distributed personhood, mind-body/mind-world permeability and entanglement, and other related themes. Contributions that consider genres outside Indian Buddhist śāstra and its pan-Asian iterations are particularly welcome.

**Topic:** Deconstruction of Language in Buddhist Philosophy  
**Contact:** Gereon Kopf [kopfg@luther.edu](mailto:kopfg@luther.edu)

**Topic:** Philosophy in Buddhist Tantras  
**Contact:** Vesna Wallace [vwallace@religion.ucsb.edu](mailto:vwallace@religion.ucsb.edu)  
**Description:** Papers would explore the ways in which Buddhist philosophical ideas are presented, reworked, and applied in Buddhist tantric literature.

**Topic:** Luminosity in South Asian Epistemology and Metaphysics  
**Contact:** Alex Yannapolis [ayiannopoulos@gmail.com](mailto:ayiannopoulos@gmail.com)  
**Description:** "Luminosity" or "illumination" (*prakāśa*, *prabhāsvara*) was a centrally important metaphor for the nature of consciousness in Indian philosophy, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike. This panel will explore how the metaphor of illumination was deployed and how it may be understood in the context of the great epistemological works of India and Tibet. While Buddhist philosophy is a main emphasis, proposals for papers dealing with non-Buddhist traditions are encouraged.

**Topic:** Religious Atheism  
**Contact:** Michael Allen [msa2b@virginia.edu](mailto:msa2b@virginia.edu)  
**Description:** The session aims to challenge the notion that atheism entails a rejection of religion; it also challenges the notion of Hinduism as theistic. Papers might explore (a) Hindu/Buddhist critiques of proofs for God's existence; (b) Hindu/Buddhist arguments for the non-existence of God; or (c) the religious dimensions of Hindu/Buddhist atheism. We hope to have two papers focusing on Buddhist materials and two papers exploring Hindu materials (e.g., early *Mīmāṃsā* or *Sāṃkhya*).

**Topic:** Buddhist Philosophy of Consciousness  
**Contact:** Ching Keng [ching.keng@gmail.com](mailto:ching.keng@gmail.com)  
**Description:** This panel would examine issues related to Buddhist theories of consciousness: How does consciousness work to achieve cognition? How do different types of consciousness (the sensory and the mental consciousness) work together? Can more than one types of consciousness arise simultaneously? It is always the case that the sensory consciousness functions in a non-conceptual manner and the mental consciousness functions in a conceptual manner?

**Topic:** Buddhism and Animal Ethics  
**Contact:** Geoff Barstow [barstowg@oregonstate.edu](mailto:barstowg@oregonstate.edu)  
**Description:** Papers on any aspect of animal ethics in Buddhism, including both historical perspectives and contemporary philosophical reflections.

Topic: Buddhist Aesthetics and Philosophy

Contact: Rohini Patel p.roshni86@gmail.com

Description: Buddhist philosophy exists within pieces that we may more readily categorize as literature or art and in modes of thought that combine the aesthetic with logical analysis. This panel will host papers who expositions illuminate Buddhist philosophy in its aesthetic modes.

-Topic: Buddhists Count

Contact: Alex Hsu (University of Notre Dame): ahsu@nd.edu

Buddhist literatures of every genre are rife with numbers. Buddhists count elements, arguments, sects, steps in a ritual, breaths, precepts, scriptures, beads, worlds, beings, distance, and the passage of time in the tens and thousands, or sometimes items are "beyond measure." Why do they do this? What units do they use? What happens when the numbers don't add up, or multiple witnesses offer differing accounts? Are there quintessentially Buddhist ways of enumerating, measuring, or scaling things? What mathematical skills do Buddhist texts cultivate in their readers? What facilities with numbers do Buddhist institutions presume of their members? And what, if anything, should scholars of Buddhism be counting next? Historical, philological, literary, philosophical, ethnographic, social-theoretical approaches all welcome. (Co-sponsorship with Buddhism Unit)

At the 2018 AAR annual meeting, the Buddhist Philosophy Unit steering committee decided to experiment with a regular re-examination of a basic topic in Buddhist philosophy. In addition to the topics listed above, we invite individual papers (or panel proposals) on the topic of suffering (*duḥkha*), the "back to basics" topic selected at our recent business meeting in San Diego. If you are interested in proposing a paper on this topic, please contact one or both of the co-chairs.

Persons wishing to organize a panel on a subject not listed above may also wish to contact one or both of the co-chairs.

Final selection of panels will depend on the strength of individual paper and panel proposals, a complementary variety of topics, and co-sponsorship (co-sponsorship allows us to have more panels and broaden the conversation).

#### **Mission Statement:**

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 metaphysics, epistemology, soteriology, ethics, and philosophy of mind.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Jiang, Tao, Rutgers University, [tjiang@rutgers.edu](mailto:tjiang@rutgers.edu)

**Chair** - Meyers, Karin, Insight Meditation Society, [karin.l.meyers@gmail.com](mailto:karin.l.meyers@gmail.com)

## **Childhood Studies and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Childhood Studies and Religion Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers and sessions that engage the intersection of religion and the child, children, and childhood, broadly construed. We especially welcome papers from points of view other than a Euro-American Christian perspective, those that engage indigenous religious traditions, and those that arise from scholarship using anthropological and social scientific theories and methods.

For session proposals, please indicate the style of session you propose, e.g. panel, roundtable, or workshop. Innovative and interactive sessions are especially welcome. In keeping with our commitment to presenting diverse perspectives and voices, we also ask that you indicate the diversity represented by proposed participants.

Specifically, for the 2020 AAR meeting in Boston, we hope to organize sessions around one or more of the following topics, in conversation with religious studies:

- children's roles and experiences in anti-oppression movements, including desegregation of public schools and labor rights
- immigrant, refugee, and migrant children's experiences, including cultural and/or literary constructions of them
- children and politics, including political discourse
- the child, children, and childhood in civil religion and nationalist mythology

### **Mission Statement:**

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 new line of scholarly inquiry.

**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:**

**Chair** - Stamper, Sally, Capital University, [sstamper@capital.edu](mailto:sstamper@capital.edu)

**Chair** - Anderson, Wendy Love, Washington University in St. Louis, [andersonwl@wustl.edu](mailto:andersonwl@wustl.edu)

## **Chinese Christianities Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Half a century ago, John Fairbank offered an “Assignment for the ‘70s,” arguing for scholars to take into consideration the encounter between American missionaries and Chinese Christians. Mindful of the growth in the academic field of Chinese Christianities, especially the rapid production of new studies in the last decade, this inaugural year of the Chinese Christianities Unit offers us a new challenge—an “Assignment for the 2020s,” which suggests the need to slow down and reconsider the field of Chinese Christianities, from multiple disciplinary, confessional, and regional perspectives. We welcome papers in the following or related areas:

#### Disciplinary perspectives:

- How do the changing relationships between Christianity and the Chinese state affect studies of mainland Chinese Christianities? How do increased restrictions on historical archives and access to lived religious communities change the nature of historical and social scientific studies?
- What theological distinctives can be found amongst Chinese Christianities? What theological misconceptions have arisen due to the orientalization of Chinese Christianities?
- Based on prior “first order” microstudies of global Chinese Christianities, what “second order” theorizations can be made about Chinese Christianities?

#### Confessional perspectives:

- While Chinese Protestants are often described as “post-denominational” (in mainland China) or “independent” (in North America and in the UK), in what ways are these confessional labels irrelevant or limiting?
- What has caused the field of Chinese Christianities to be over-preoccupied with forms of Protestantism as opposed to other major branches of Christianity?
- What divergences and convergences can be found between Chinese Protestants versus Chinese Catholics and Chinese Orthodox? What about when compared to “fringe” or “heterodox” groups?

#### Regional perspectives:

- In what ways do Chinese Christianities differ when comparing expressions across various parts of “Greater China”—mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan?
- How have different waves of migration shaped global forms of Chinese Christianities?
- How do transregional and transnational networks (e.g. Lausanne, CCOWE, FABC) offer bridges and barriers to understanding Chinese Christianities?
- How do global Chinese Christianities problematize Western public-private dichotomies?

### **Mission Statement:**

The Chinese Christianities Unit provides a collaborative forum for scholars of different disciplinary, regional, and confessional specialties to engage in an academic discourse in 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 Chinese around the globe. “Chinese” is an expansive term, often including mainland China as a contested “homeland,” and a large, linguistically and culturally diverse “Chinese diaspora,” totaling more than a fifth of the world’s population. 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.). The program Unit aims to offer an academic forum to interrogate what can and has been classified as “Chinese Christianity,” or “Chinese Christianities,” in all its diverse, pluriform expressions.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair - Chow, Alexander**, University of Edinburgh, [alexander.chow@ed.ac.uk](mailto:alexander.chow@ed.ac.uk)

**Chair - Chow, Christie Chui-Shan**, City Seminary of New York, [chui-shan.chow@alum.ptsem.edu](mailto:chui-shan.chow@alum.ptsem.edu)

## **Chinese Religions Unit**

### **Call Text:**

All proposals for both panels and papers are 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/>). 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 themes, please get in touch with the contact person attached to the theme:

Food and Chinese Religions: Jessica Zu, [pureoneness@gmail.com](mailto:pureoneness@gmail.com)

Confucian Perspectives on Border Peoples: Xurong Kong, [xkong@kean.edu](mailto:xkong@kean.edu)

Han Chinese Participation in the Post-Mao Religious Revival in Ethnic Tibetan Areas: Maria Turek, [maria.turek@utoronto.ca](mailto:maria.turek@utoronto.ca)

Sinicization of Religions in China: Rongdao Lai, [rongdao.lai@mcgill.ca](mailto:rongdao.lai@mcgill.ca)

When Chinese Mahayana Meets Theravada: Encounters and Hybridities in Modern Asia: Ester Bianchi, [ester.bianchi@unipg.it](mailto:ester.bianchi@unipg.it) and Jack Meng-Tat Chia, [mc2286@cornell.edu](mailto:mc2286@cornell.edu)

Digital Methods in the Study of Chinese Religions: Ruifeng Chen, [chenr36@mcmaster.ca](mailto:chenr36@mcmaster.ca)

Modern Forged Manuscripts of East Asian Religions: Ruifeng Chen, [chenr36@mcmaster.ca](mailto:chenr36@mcmaster.ca)

Gender Discourse in Chinese Religions: Shaodan Zhang, [szhang98@illinois.edu](mailto:szhang98@illinois.edu)

One Size Doesn't Fit All: Tailoring Buddhist Teachings to Laypeople: Alan Wagner, [awagner@post.harvard.edu](mailto:awagner@post.harvard.edu). This panel brings together perspectives which see beyond the simple division of Buddhist communities into monastic and lay spheres. In late medieval China in particular, we find several examples of prominent Buddhist teachers who not only wrote for a lay audience, but tailored their teachings to different classes of laypeople. Rather than treating the laity as a homogenous group, such writers see that differences of age, gender, profession, and social class have important impacts on people's religious needs and on the kinds of practice and teaching that are most appropriate for each group. Nuanced views of the lay population illuminate distinctions in Buddhists' understandings of karma, "cultivation", paths to liberation, precepts and "skillful means" as these apply to the realities of daily worldly life. This panel welcomes comparative perspectives, both modern and premodern, from across China which show similar attention to the diversity of a religious community and their needs.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Sun, Anna, Kenyon College, suna@kenyon.edu

**Chair** - Bryson, Megan, University of Tennessee, mbryson4@utk.edu

## **Christian Spirituality Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Christian Spirituality Program Unit is seeking proposals for papers on the following topics:

The spirituality of academic labor/the #aarsolidarity movement.

Spirituality resources for the challenges facing higher education.

Apocalyptic spirituality.

A session on the recently published *The Routledge International Handbook of Spirituality in Society and the Professions*.

The AAR/SBL annual meeting as spiritual practice.

Spirituality of texts in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Spirituality in times of political change.

Spiritual dimensions of memory loss (i.e., Alzheimer's, dementia, traumatic brain injury).

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit serves as a forum for scholars working in the interdisciplinary field of Christian spirituality. It is committed to the following:

- Developing, refining, and demonstrating appropriate methodologies for the academic study of spirituality.
- Exploring models for describing and facilitating interdisciplinary conversation on the nature of spirituality among religion scholars of all perspectives and religions.
- Initiating discussion in the field of global spirituality, both religious and secular.
- Articulating the connections between scholarship and spiritual practice.
- Ensuring diversity in denominational affiliation, gender, race, and ethnic backgrounds.

**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:**

**Chair** - Zen, Beringia, Saint Agnes Medical Center, [beringia.zen@samc.com](mailto:beringia.zen@samc.com)

**Chair** - Benefiel, Margaret, Shalem Institute For Spiritual Formation, [margaret@shalem.org](mailto:margaret@shalem.org)

## **Christian Systematic Theology Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Christian Systematic Theology Section invites proposals for individual papers or complete panels related to our theme of participation. We invite proposals to consider the nature of participation as deployed in Christian theology. We welcome both arguments for and against the use of participation as a theological category, as well as discussions making use of this category to advance substantive claims. We are especially interested in work that clearly indicates just what is meant by its use of the term, filling it out with specific and meaningful content.

We are also interested in proposals for a possible co-sponsored session with the Eastern Orthodox Unit on the question of universal salvation. Within Orthodox Christian traditions, patristic authors have espoused varying conceptions of heaven, hell, apokatastasis, and the hope that even the devil might be eventually saved. From Origen and Isaac of Nineveh, to the modern St. Silouan the Athonite and Sergii Bulgakov, influential theologians and philosophers have questioned how beliefs in God's ultimate love and compassion might be balanced with commitments to divine justice and human freedom hypothesizing the salvation of all. Recent scholarship has prompted renewed interest in theologies of universal salvation more broadly—notably, David Bentley Hart's *That All shall be Saved: Heaven, Hell and Universal Salvation* (Yale University Press, 2019), Ilaria Ramelli's *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena* (Brill, 2013), and Michael J. McClymond's *The Devil's Redemption: An Interpretation of the Christian Debate over Universal Salvation* (Baker Academic, 2018). For this session, we invite proposals for individual papers and pre-arranged panels on all aspects of, and approaches to universal salvation. In addition to addressing theological and philosophical inquiries and scholarship related this topic, we also welcome proposals that comparatively address universal salvation in other religions and Western Christian traditions, and in diverse forms of Orthodox Christian expression (hymns, icons, liturgical rites, lived practice, etc.).

Papers should be constructive or synthetic rather than merely historical or analytical in nature, but grounding in traditional texts and discussions is desired. We especially invite proposals related to the following sub-themes:

- Transformation (in God and in creatures), including justification and sanctification
- Christology
- Ecclesiology
- Sacraments
- Ethics (imitatio Christi)
- Suffering and embodiment as participation in Christ
- Theological participation applied to political participation and/or issues of social justice
- Exclusion within / from the Christian community
- Epistemology

- Eschatology
- Conversations with Orthodoxy (synergy, theosis)

**Mission Statement:**

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

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Johnson, Junius, Baylor University, junius.johnson@gmail.com

**Chair** - Crisp, Oliver, Fuller Theological Seminary, oliver.crisp@fuller.edu

## **Class, Religion, and Theology Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Class, Religion, and Theology Unit invites paper proposals on any of the following topics, in addition to coordinating a pre-arranged roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election.

#### **(1) *Contingent Labor in the Discipline and Across the Academy and Globe***

As part of the the AAR's 2020 reflection on "the AAR as an Academic Guild," the Class, Religion, and Theology Unit and the Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty Working Group (possibly in partnership with additional committees/units) seek papers that analyze contingent labor within the discipline, within higher education overall, and/or as a labor system that is becoming nationally and globally dominant. We are interested both in methodologically descriptive papers that critically analyze a particular aspect of contingent labor (or the experience of contingent workers) in one or more of these contexts and methodologically normative papers that evaluate the contingent labor system from an ethical or critical-theoretic standpoint.

#### **(2) *Ecological Crisis and Vulnerable Peoples***

For a possible co-sponsored session of the Religion and Ecology Unit, Religion and Disability Studies Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, and Religion and Migration Unit:

The global climate crisis affects people who are already most susceptible to environmentally linked degradation. We invite papers addressing the devastating impact of climate change and connected ecological crisis on vulnerable peoples, including persons with disabilities, the working class, indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrants, people living unhoused and/or with food insecurities, and others. We welcome engagement from a range of disciplines, methods, and religious traditions.

#### **(3) *The Labor of Black, Brown, Yellow, and Indigenous Racialized Bodies in/and U.S. Religious Traditions***

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, the Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, the Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, we welcome proposals on the topic of "the Labor of Black, Brown, Yellow, and Indigenous Racialized Bodies in/and U.S. Religious Traditions."

Proposals may address the following or related questions:

- How does the concept of labor, with its multiple connotations of both economic production and social reproduction, offer a useful way to make sense of black, brown, yellow, and indigenous racialized bodies' participation in U.S. religious traditions?
- What distinct kinds of labor have brown, indigenous, yellow, or black racialized people been expected to perform in our own religious communities and/or in predominantly white religious communities?
- How has labor (productive and/or reproductive) been a site for religious expression and/or resistance to oppression by indigenous, yellow, black, or brown racialized bodies?
- How have labor hierarchies and the labor of subordinated racial groups been sacralized?
- How is the religious labor of yellow, black, indigenous or brown racialized people further unequalized by hierarchies of gender and sexuality?

*(4) Food Systems: Interfaces of Religion, Ecology, and Class*

For a possible tri-sponsored session with the Religion and Ecology, Religion and Food, and Class, Religion and Theology units, we invite proposals on the theme of food systems as interfaces between religion, ecology, and class. Food practices are central to nearly every religion — and this food is generated by broader food systems that simultaneously have major environmental impacts, make use of myriad forms of exploited (gendered and raced) labor, and mediate widespread class-based economic and health inequalities. Proposals can address one or several of these (or related) intersections. Historical, ethnographic, sociological, theological, and critical-theoretic methods are all welcome.

*(5) Open Call*

We invite proposals related to our Unit's purpose statement (see online CFP), especially those that focus on class inequalities; labor (understood as economic production and/or social reproduction or both); the intersections of class with race, gender/sexuality, disability, and/or environmental degradation; or corporate domination of workers.

**Mission Statement:**

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

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Ross, Rosetta E., Spelman College, rross@spelman.edu

**Chair** - Posadas, Jeremy, Austin College, prof.posadas@gmail.com

## **Cognitive Science of Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

1. 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 2020 AAR-CSR Unit's sessions.
2. Cultural evolution and cognitive historiography (co-sponsored with the Cognitive Science Unit of the Society for Biblical Literature). We invite scholars to submit a proposal for a paper or panel session who are using cognitive approaches to identify cultural evolutionary processes (e.g., social change, gene-culture co-evolution, transmission of information via social learning, imitation, prestige-bias, etc.) throughout history, especially in antiquity and the ancient near east.
3. Cognitive Science of Religion Unit and the Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit. In recent years there has been increasing interest in the study of yoga using ideas and methods from cognitive science and neuroscience. This panel aims to bring together scholars of both yoga and cognitive science/neuroscience to gauge the current state of the field.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Lenfesty, Hillary**, Arizona State University, lenfesty@asu.edu

**Chair - Robertson, Paul**, University of New Hampshire, paul.robertson@unh.edu

## **Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit**

### **Call Text:**

#### Theories of Violence

In conjunction with this year's Presidential theme of "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild," CARV is taking the opportunity to return to the foundations of our Unit, asking the very basic question, "How should we think about violence?" We hope to have two panels on this topic:

- We are seeking short communications (of 10 minutes or less) on how you have used a theory of violence in your own work. What theories have been effective for you? What theories of violence, however promising, did not pan out in your own research? How have you combined theories to greater effect? We are looking to represent a diversity of both theoretical models and issues of focus, and invite papers that deal with any tradition and any time period. Papers may deal with any form or manifestation of violence, including but not limited to: physical violence, psychological violence, gender-based violence, economic violence, political violence, ecological violence, and violence related to war, protest movements, and climate change.
- We also plan to convene a pre-arranged panel in which theorists of violence provide their working definitions of violence, explain how their theory of violence works regarding why violence occurs, and the role religion plays in it. While the papers will be relatively brief, there will be an extensive facilitated discussion with the goal of generating ideas for how these theories work in contrast and complement to one another.

#### Religion, Violence, and Surveillance

##### *Co-Sponsored with Religion and Politics Unit*

Religious communities are both targets of and consumers of surveillance. State monitoring of faith groups has a lengthy history, with particular strategies deployed in different periods and unique contexts. Yet academic analysis of religious practice as a site of and for violent or violence-inducing security surveillance remains in its infancy. This panel seeks to encourage discussion about the ways in which religious identity is invoked by socio-political authorities as a justification for its surveilled gaze of "others"; how some members of religious groups or other agents deploy surveillance tactics, like social media "trolling," to advance their own agendas and possibly silence vulnerable members of society; and the complicity of technology companies in engaging in overt and covert surveillance, oftentimes supported by the state apparatus. Ideally, these and other topics will be explored across a range of geographical contexts and faith traditions.

#### Saints in Divided Societies

##### *Co-Sponsored with Comparative Studies in Religion*

In societies where interaction and understanding across diversities of wealth, ethnicity, religion, or political values give way to fear and blame between identity groups, such diversities can

ossify into intractable divisions—often (though not always) manifesting as sectarian violence or the closing of physical borders. In such societies, religious phenomena are only ever part of the picture, yet their symbol-systems and invitations to identification and exclusion become particularly motivating in the dynamics of division. This panel focuses attention on how holy people, religious exemplars, or saints (these themselves being contested categories) are constructed and mobilized in divided societies, exploring the ways that saintly figures are understood and used so as to reinforce, undermine, or reconfigure the social divisions in whose interstices they are perceived to move. This panel will be by invitation, but if your work fits the theme and you would like to be considered for an invitation, please email Aaron Hollander ([ahollander@geii.org](mailto:ahollander@geii.org)).

### Religion, Violence, and Xenophobia

*Co-Sponsored with the SBL's Violence and Representations of Violence in Antiquity Unit*

Fear of the “other” has been and continues to be a frequent contributor to violence. We seek papers addressing any intersection of xenophobia and violence from antiquity/late antiquity to our present moment. What constituted xenophobia in the past and/or in the present? Is xenophobia a form of violence? Or rather, does xenophobia lead to or exacerbate violence, and if so in what ways?

### Spiritual Dimensions of Memory Loss

*Co-Sponsored with Religion and Disability Studies and Moral Injury Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Unit*

We invite proposals at the intersection of psychology, religion, trauma, and disability on the threats, experiences, and care for those experiencing trauma effected by violence and/or moral injury, particularly persons with disabilities, veterans, survivors of diverse violences, and other vulnerable populations.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Denton-Borhaug, Kelly, Moravian College, denton-borhaugk@moravian.edu

**Chair** - Fruchtman, Diane, Rutgers University, dsf79@religion.rutgers.edu

## **Comparative Religious Ethics Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Reflecting this year's presidential theme of "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild," our call for papers focuses on the transformation of comparative religious ethics since its emergence in the 1970s and the directions it is going in regard to subject matter, methodology, and forms of dissemination. Themes especially welcome this year include the following:

- The Limits of Enhancement

Given the recent advances in health care and bioethics, what can comparative ethicists say in regard to the plasticity of human nature and the Good in the context of technological advances? Are there limits to ideas of "perfection"? How do normative traditions reconcile spiritual ideals that seem to require more than what is given or "natural" with negative attitudes towards the uses of technology for enhancement?

- Postcolonialism and CRE

Much of the work in CRE does not explicitly address the legacy of colonialism not only in regard to how ethicists understand non-Western traditions but also in the very exercise of comparison that has historically been exploited for colonialist purposes. Are there specific methodologies or foci of comparison that could more responsibly bring into relief the legacy of colonialism? What can CRE learn from Postcolonial Studies?

- Sumner B. Twiss's Contributions to CRE

Sumner Twiss has been a signal voice in the field of comparative religious ethics from its inception in the 1970s as a discrete academic subject to its maturation in the 21st century. Four decades after the publication of *Comparative Religious Ethics*, what has been the impact of Twiss's work on CRE in regard to methodology, the self-understanding of the field, and the role of CRE within the larger academy.

- The Ethical Implications of Artificial Intelligence

The rise of "thinking machines" and artificial intelligence technologies in recent years raises a variety of ethical issues for religious ethicists, particularly as AI becomes more humanlike. Beyond public policy questions about the potential harm/benefit of AI, there are also philosophical questions about such matters as the moral status of AI, the relevant moral differences with human beings, the implications of superintelligence, and the ethics of AI algorithms.

- Civil Disobedience and Duties to Resist

What do moral traditions have to say about duties to resist unjust political orders or forms of oppression? When is it defensible to engage in uncivil disobedience? Are current protest movements (e.g., BLM, hacktivism, Antifa) expressions of democratic empowerment or threats to democratic sovereignty?

- Activism in CRE

To what extent can comparative ethicists assume the role of an activist? Do we threaten academic integrity when the political or normative goals of the scholar cannot be distinguished from his or her academic goals?

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Crane, Jonathan K., Emory University, [jonathan.k.crane@emory.edu](mailto:jonathan.k.crane@emory.edu)

**Chair** - Lee, Jung, Northeastern University, [ju.lee@neu.edu](mailto:ju.lee@neu.edu)

## **Comparative Studies in Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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

- Comparative Studies in Hinduism and Judaism: The Spiritual Genius of the Guru and the Rebbe? Contact: Yudit Greenberg ([ygreenberg@rollins.edu](mailto:ygreenberg@rollins.edu))
- Multisensory Ritual Modalities. Contact: Eric Huntington ([erhuntington@gmail.com](mailto:erhuntington@gmail.com))
- Indigenous Religions and Indigenous Christianities. Contact: Thomas Seat ([thomas.seat@ptsem.edu](mailto:thomas.seat@ptsem.edu)) – potentially co-sponsored by the World Christianity Unit.
- Saints in Divided Societies. Contact: Aaron Hollander ([ahollander@geii.org](mailto:ahollander@geii.org)) – potentially co-sponsored by the Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit
- Visual Materials and New Media as the Products of Scholarship. Co-sponsored by the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit (see that Unit's Call for Proposals for details). Contact: Eric Huntington ([erhuntington@gmail.com](mailto:erhuntington@gmail.com))
- Implicit and Explicit Comparison in Religious Studies Scholarship: A Collaborative Experiment in the Use of Buddhist Categories. Contact: Christopher Jensen ([ChristopherJensen@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:ChristopherJensen@cunet.carleton.ca))
- The Place of Comparison/Comparativists at the AAR. Co-sponsored by the Religion in Premodern Europe and the Mediterranean Unit. Contact: David Freidenreich ([dfreiden@colby.edu](mailto:dfreiden@colby.edu)) or Oliver Freiberger ([of@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:of@austin.utexas.edu))
- Comparison as Site of Self-Reflective Inquiry: How our Disciplinary Identities Shape our Comparative Interests at the AAR and Beyond. Contact: Maria Turek ([mariaturek@icloud.com](mailto:mariaturek@icloud.com))
- Author Meets Critics: Oliver Freiberger, *Considering Comparison: A Method for Religious Studies*. Contact: David Freidenreich ([dfreiden@colby.edu](mailto:dfreiden@colby.edu))
- Teaching the Saints through Comparative Pedagogy. Contact: Barbara Zimbalist ([bezimbalist@utep.edu](mailto:bezimbalist@utep.edu))
- What's the Point? A Roundtable of the Practical Effects of the Scholarly Comparison of Religion. Contact: Nikolas Hoel ([n-hoel@neiu.edu](mailto:n-hoel@neiu.edu))

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides the opportunity for significant cross-traditional and cross-cultural inquiry. We traditionally solicit paper sessions that provide occasions for comparative inquiry seriously engaging two or more religious traditions around a common topic and we ensure that critical reflection is given to the conceptual tools therein employed. We welcome co-sponsorship opportunities with other AAR units.

This Unit has a listserv (CompRel), which is used primarily for announcements, calls for papers, and discussions about panel proposals. If you wish to subscribe, please send a request to [of@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:of@austin.utexas.edu).

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

We do not consider individual paper submissions, only roundtables or panels.

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Freiberger, Oliver, University of Texas, [of@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:of@austin.utexas.edu)

**Chair** - Vargas-O'Bryan, Ivette, Austin College, [ivargas@austincolllege.edu](mailto:ivargas@austincolllege.edu)

## **Comparative Theology Unit**

### **Call Text:**

After a number of years in which we have expanded the outreach of our Comparative Theology Unit by collaborating with a number of different Units in the AAR, this year's call for papers will focus somewhat more strongly on the identity of comparative theology, and on different approaches by practitioners of comparative theology.

However, we will still accept panel proposals for one collaboration:

- Co-sponsored session (Liberation Theologies Unit/Comparative Theologies Unit/Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit/Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit)

Possible title: "Land, Revolutions, and the Religious Being: in Search of Political Theologies of Liberation"

We invite proposals for a co-sponsored session that consider the setting of the 2020 meeting in Boston by examining the relationship between revolutions and land in different ways. Possible areas include the post-colonial critique of comparative theology and theologies of peace and conflict resolution; theological intersections at geographic, theological, and confessional borders; learning and activism across those same borders; comparative theologies as praxis/therapy for overcoming the impact of mere tolerance, hate, and conflict; political theologies of liberation in relation to conflict, land, ecologies, and climate.

Furthermore, we encourage panel or paper proposals on the following themes that were proposed in the business meeting:

60th anniversary of the Center for the study of World Religions

Jewish-Christian Comparative Theology

Muslim-Christian Comparative Theology

Teaching Comparative Theology

Political Implications of Comparative Theology

Comparative Theology, Theologies of Religions exploring a single topic

Comparative Theology and Chaplaincy Working at the Borders

Comparative Theology and Art, e.g. music

Comparative Theology from the Prison

The prophetic in Abrahamic religions

Comparative approaches to non-dualism

Responses to the edited volume: Theology without Walls; specifically comparative theologians responding to Theology without Walls (proposed by Peter Feldmeier)

Responses to Method and Meaning in Comparative Theology (proposed by Christian Krokus)

Comparative approaches to ecclesial structure in collaboration with Ecclesial Investigations Unit

Poverty in Comparative Theology, perhaps with Liberation Theology

Comparative Theology and Scriptural Reasoning

Divine Presence and mediations of the divine

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.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Bidlack, Bede, Saint Anselm College, [bbidlack@anselm.edu](mailto:bbidlack@anselm.edu)

**Chair** - Valkenberg, Wilhelmus, Catholic University of America, [valkenberg@cua.edu](mailto:valkenberg@cua.edu)

## **Confucian Traditions Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We welcome full panel proposals and individual paper submissions on the following themes for 2020.

- Discussion of a recent book or books on any aspect of Confucian Studies
- Different ways to teach Confucianism in various contexts (such as temporal vs. thematic structure; or classics only vs. later historical periods)
- Translation workshop on a primary text
- Debates over the contemporary revival of Confucianism; is this good or bad? In what ways?
- Scholarship and public engagement related to Confucianism; how to handle public-facing scholarship as a teacher of Confucianism

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

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit is committed to the study of the diversity of religious traditions associated with Confucius and his followers, including areas where Confucian thought and practice intersect with those of other traditions. The Unit embraces historical, philosophical, and dialogical approaches, and is not located in any single country or discipline.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Lee, Pauline**, Saint Louis University, pauline.lee@slu.edu

**Chair - Stalnaker, Aaron**, Indiana University, astalnak@indiana.edu

## **Contemplative Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

- Contemplation and ethics: e.g. compassion and social justice activism; mysticism and morality, or other relevant topics considering why these are important in the study of religion.
- Qualifications and standards in training for teaching contemplation in the classroom—yoga, mindfulness, Buddhist meditation, qigong, etc. What goals do we set for ourselves, for our students? What complementarity or tension might there be between the “practice” and “study” of what we offer?
- Rational and non-rational aspects of contemplative practice within traditions: e.g. lectio divina, Tibetan Buddhist debate, kōan practice, ideally with very specific examples and supporting epistemological structures from the relevant traditions.
- Contemplative dimensions of Ritual—how/what does the “contemplative” add to Ritual Studies in our area(s)?
- Indigenous Contemplative Practices—how do such practices expand the domain of contemplative studies and challenge dominant views of authority in the field?
- Review of Niki Clements, *Sites of the Ascetic Self* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2020)

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Simmer-Brown, Judith, Naropa University, [jsb@naropa.edu](mailto:jsb@naropa.edu)

**Chair** - Roth, Harold D., Brown University, [harold\\_roth@brown.edu](mailto:harold_roth@brown.edu)

## **Contemporary Islam Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Contemporary Islam Group is soliciting proposals for the 2020 AAR meeting on any topics related to the study of Islam in the contemporary period. This year we have particular interests in the following topics and would welcome papers or panels:

- 1) on academic freedom and professional risks including topics such as
  - engagement with Title VI research centers
  - BDS involvement
  - public scholarship
  - international research risks
- 2) that assess the contribution of diverse methodological experimentation in the study of Islam in recent years, such as the incorporation of critical race theory and black feminist thought in the study of contemporary Islam
- 3) on the impact of elections and state power on Muslim communities across the globe. We are especially interested in papers/panels on surveillance, Muslim bans, and citizenship revocation from a comparative Afro-Asian lens (Uyghurs, Black Muslims in the Americas, Indian Muslims, etc.)
- 4) on Muslim engagement with arts and aesthetic discourses
- 5) prearranged author-meets-critics style panel on a recently published book
- 6) proposals from people working outside of academia on Islam and involved in political work, policy, activism, think tanks, working with politicians, etc., or those who analyze such public engagement, for a potential panel on this topic.

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 Muslims.

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.

### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of this Unit is to provide a venue for discussing emerging issues and developments within Muslim societies and Islamic studies during the past 200 years, particularly in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Salomon, Noah, Carleton College, nsalomon@carleton.edu

**Chair** - Ayubi, Zahra, Dartmouth College, zayubi@gmail.com

**Chair** - Wheeler, Kayla Renée, Grand Valley State University, krw18@case.edu

## **Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Contemporary Pagan Studies is an interdisciplinary Unit, and we welcome submissions of theoretically and analytically engaged papers and panels relating to modern Paganism and Polytheism, employing scholarly analysis to discuss the topic from any relevant methodology or theoretical orientation. In addition to receiving paper or panel proposals on topics generally in the purview of Contemporary Pagan Studies, we especially welcome proposals that address the following themes:

- Cultural appropriation.
- Contemporary approaches to magic.
- Practices involving ancestor worship or devotion.
- What are the analytical frameworks we use to discuss paranormal or magic phenomena?
- The works of Philip Pullman
- How is the current interest in Heathenry being impacted by trends in popular culture and media? In particular we seek papers exploring the influence of television shows such as "The Vikings", the rise of interest in genealogy and ancestry.com, internet message boards and meme culture, and Marvel. (Co-sponsored with the Religion and Popular Culture Unit).

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides a place for scholars interested in pursuing studies 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 both historically and within contemporary society and to examine how other religions may intersect with these dynamic and mutable religious communities.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Berry, Damon, Saint Lawrence University, dberry@stlawu.edu**

**Chair - Hale, Amy, Atlanta, GA, amyhale93@gmail.com**

## Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Unit

### Call Text:

In ‘Something from Nothing: The Art of Rap’, Lord Jamar of the Brand Nubian recounts the history of Hip-Hop music as one where, “We took the f—ing record player, the only thing that’s playing music in our f—ing crib and turned it into an instrument.” A similar story could be told of the bricolage-like study of religion and/in Hip-Hop. What’s more—the past decade has witnessed an explosion of works which have pressed the case that the genre, culture, and people that constitute Hip-Hop present a legitimate object of study worthy of careful and critical analysis. The success of these efforts have culminated in pedagogical innovations, monographs, anthologies, journal publications, conference programming, and archive developments that have changed the institutional landscape in which our scholarship is carried out.

This year, we invite paper proposals that consider how these gains shape the theories and methods we employ, especially when Hip-Hop is *not* our data.

Our main session will take Richard Newton’s *Identifying Roots: Alex Haley and the Anthropology of Scriptures* (Equinox 2020) as an example of a work that takes a Hip-Hop sensibility to “the texts that people read but that also seem to read them back.” Mixing ethnographic autobiography, intellectual history, Close Reading, and discourse analysis, Newton tells a transgressive story about the category of scriptures unbound by disciplinary standards.

Topically, we welcome papers that engage the following topics in various theoretical and methodological contexts, and with divergent hip hop sensibilities: Afrofuturism; Kanye West; Reformed theology, White Evangelicalism; contexts; colonialism/ post-colonialism, and constructs of identity/difference.

### Mission Statement:

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Miller, Monica R., Lehigh University, mrm213@lehigh.edu

**Chair** - White Hodge, Daniel, North Park University, dan@whitehodge.com

## **Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The CTDR group 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.

CTDR invites proposals on the following topics:

- In recognition of the 80th anniversary of Walter Benjamin's death, we invite papers that consider Benjamin's impact on the study of religion, media, and history. We are especially interested in proposals that explore how to teach The Arcades Project in a religious studies course. In any case we expect papers or roundtable proposals that use Benjamin's work and critically explore the boundaries of its utility, applicability, and teachability.
- 'Bricolage' as a key concept in the study of religion.
- The nature of 'the postcritical.'
- Image and metaphors of rule.
- Ethnography Is, Ethnography Ain't. Inspired by John L. Jackson's 2012 article, this theme critically engages the definition, practices, and boundaries of ethnography as a research methodology. Of particular interest are the ways in which anthropologists, religious studies scholars, and others mobilize ethnography differently (perhaps, divergently) and integrate ethnography with other methodologies (e.g., archival). Co-sponsorship with Anthropology of Religion Program Unit.
- For 2020 we also plan on co-sponsoring a session with the Sociology of Religion Program Unit for which we do not seek proposals: "Putting the social back into the sociology of religion (and religious studies in general). Round table featuring Veronique Altglas."

### **Mission Statement:**

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, legitimization, and the material basis of religion

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Scheible, Kristin, Reed College, scheibblk@reed.edu

**Chair** - McCloud, Sean, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, spmcclou@uncc.edu

## Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit

### Call Text:

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.

For the 2020 Annual Meeting, we particularly welcome proposals on the following topics:

- “The AAR as Scholarly Guild”—The theme of the 2020 Annual Meeting offers an opportunity to critically reflect on the history of the organization and its attendant units in order to think about what the AAR can do in the present and future. The American Academy of Religion dates to 1963 when the early 20th century organization, the National Association of Biblical Instructors, changed its name. What lingering traces betray this genealogy? And what changes have occurred with regard to themes, policies, units, and people across the decades? We welcome free-standing proposals on the AAR’s history, as well as proposals for co-sponsorships with other units interested in critical reflection on how they have changed over time.
- “Alternate Futures for the Study of Religion”—What are the apparent dead ends that litter the landscape of the field of the study of religion? Why, for instance, have programs in the psychology of religion declined? What accounts for the marginalization of philology or the waning of comparative work in the study of religion? How has religious studies related to more recent disciplines like ethnic studies and cultural studies? How might these pasts be used to reshape our disciplinary future? What new disciplinary intersections lie on the horizon?
- “The (After)lives of Religion and Literature”—Despite its declared demise, interest in the intersections of the literary and the study of religion is having a renaissance. What accounts for this recent development and what are its key thematics? How has the relationship between religious and literary studies been configured in different historical and cultural/religious contexts? What does it herald for notions of truth, credibility, critique, secularity, and fiction? For various practices of reading, the circulation of texts, and the shuffling of authoritative and vernacular genres? For possible co-sponsorship with the Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit.
- “Passages and Possessions”—The on-going colonial migrations of populations, both forced and voluntary, have given rise to some of the most contentious categories and enduring debates in the study of religion. These categories include the fetish, spirit-possession, and syncretism; the related debates have centered on questions of subjectivity, agency, sovereignty, and citizenship. What histories have yet to be told about these discursive and political formations? How might the field reckon with the colonial production of knowledge while yielding to indigenous sources of theory? How should these wider histories inflect how we understand the narrower history of organizations like the AAR?

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

**Process:**

Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Pritchard, Elizabeth Ann, Bowdoin College, epritcha@bowdoin.edu

**Chair** - Scott, J. Barton, University of Toronto, barton.scott@utoronto.ca

## Daoist Studies Unit

### Call Text:

The Daoist Studies Unit of the AAR invites proposals for individual papers and paper sessions concerning all aspects of Daoism from any period, geographical area, or methodological and theoretical approach. For the 2020 AAR Annual Meeting in Boston, we welcome proposals for 90-minute paper sessions (3-4 papers, a presider, and a respondent), roundtable, as well as individual papers. Please feel free to experiment with alternative formats.

Many exciting topics have been proposed in the first run of call for paper. If you are interested in any of them, please do not hesitate to email the point persons or the DSU co-chairs. The newly proposed topics include:

- Daoism and medicine — Michael Stanley-Baker ([msb@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:msb@ntu.edu.sg))
- Daoism, mind, and brain — Julia McClenon ([julia\\_mcclenon@ucsb.edu](mailto:julia_mcclenon@ucsb.edu))
- Daoist Bodies and sensory religions — Michael Naparstek ([naparstek@wisc.edu](mailto:naparstek@wisc.edu))
- Lived Daoism (as in applied, enacted, practiced, and/or embodied) — Julia McClenon ([julia\\_mcclenon@ucsb.edu](mailto:julia_mcclenon@ucsb.edu))
- Daoism in Hunan
- The relationship between early Daoist philosophy and religion
- Yao Daoism
- The state of the field

Several paper sessions in the last two AAR meetings have been widely appreciated by the attendees for their innovative approaches and scholarly contributions. Some of the organizers would like to further explore the topics and/or methodologies and broaden participation. Individuals who wish to join the on-going discussion are encouraged to contact the organizers. These topics include:

- Daoism and ritual theory—Tobias Zuerl ([tzurn@wisc.edu](mailto:tzurn@wisc.edu))
- Daoist material culture—Gil Raz ([gil.raz@dartmouth.edu](mailto:gil.raz@dartmouth.edu))
- Daoist visual culture—Aaron Reich ([areich@sju.edu](mailto:areich@sju.edu))
- Teaching Daoism in the classroom—Jonathan Pettit ([jeep@hawaii.edu](mailto:jeep@hawaii.edu))

The DSU will continue to accept new topics. Questions about formats and innovative possibilities, as well as help in assembling paper sessions, may be directed to the co-chairs.

The DSU strongly supports diversity and inclusivity. Our Unit requires all pre-arranged sessions and session proposals to incorporate diversity of gender, race/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 be advised that submitting the proposal to more than one program Unit. Co-sponsored paper sessions draw a larger audience and promote dialogue between different fields. Additionally, it will significantly improve the odds of your proposal being accepted. A complete list of AAR program Unit can be found at [https://papers.aarweb.org/program\\_Units](https://papers.aarweb.org/program_Units)

**Mission Statement:**

The Daoist Studies Unit organizes the most consistent venue for sharing research on Daoist materials anywhere in the Western world. The DSU is guided by a vision with three main goals: to reach into the vast recesses of the largely unstudied Daoist tradition; to reach out in conversation with the wider 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Pettit, Jonathan, University of Hawaii, jeep@hawaii.edu

**Chair** - Choo, Jessey, Rutgers University, j.choo@rutgers.edu

## **Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Death, Dying and Beyond Unit invites paper proposals on the following topics:

- The “beyond” – histories, beliefs and rituals, contemporary instantiations, in relation to technology, social media, artistic/aesthetic representations
- Death, Dying and the beyond in Literature – how are death, dying and the beyond portrayed in literature? How have new literary mediums influenced, affected, and expressed death and dying? How has literature been an avenue for the grieving? Aesthetics of this particular kind of literature; death/dying guides; how-to’s. How do things die in literature? And where?

The Death, Dying and Beyond and the Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Units invite paper proposals for a cosponsored panel on the intersection and paradoxical connection between the technological advancements in regards to extending and maintaining human life and the accompanying increase in the use of technology to create space/platforms for mourning practices and expressions of grief. Are humans immortalized by and through these technologies? If so, how? How do these technologies affect the experience and expression of grief? How do these technologies affect perceptions of the afterlife or the beyond? How does transhumanism as an emerging field speak to, intersect with, affect death and dying studies? Ethics within death and dying? How has/might religious practice change to incorporate technology (e.g. especially if you exist forever within an online platform)?

The Death, Dying and Beyond and the Teaching Religion Units invite paper proposals for a cosponsored panel on the teaching of death, dying and beyond. “Death and Dying in World Religions,” “Sociology of Death,” “Cultures of Death and Dying,” or some variation of this undergraduate course usually exists as a general education course or elective in which students learn about how death, dying, and the afterlife are experienced, considered, handled, ritualized, mourned and memorialized, etc. in different religious traditions, cultures, geographies. Many courses, whether housed in religion departments, sociology or philosophy, explore a variety of approaches and methodologies while experimenting with new mediums and pedagogies. This cosponsored session invites paper proposals broadly on the teaching of death, dying, and beyond both within the university and outside the classroom.

### **Mission Statement:**

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

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Defibaugh, Amy, Temple University, amy.defibaugh@temple.edu

**Chair** - Cann, Candi K., Baylor University, candi\_cann@baylor.edu

## **Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

1. Title: Current Debates on Women's Ordination to the Diaconate (Joint Session with Ecclesiological Investigations Unit)

At this session we would like to discuss women's ordination in various forms across churches, with the focus on those churches that are currently in debates about expanding ordination through the diaconate or other structures. The conversation surrounding the female diaconate is especially important in Orthodox Christianity (in both Eastern and Oriental traditions) and for the Catholic Church. Interest in the historical tradition of the female diaconate has prompted dialogue and controversy within Orthodox Christianity, as well as reconsideration of more recent expressions of the female diaconate where it exists. In the Catholic Church, the discussion about the female diaconate did reach a certain level of theoretical consensus, but has yet to result in any practical applications. In addition to ecclesiological aspects, we welcome proposals that explore related questions of sexuality and gender constructions, taboos, ideals, prejudices, etc. that shape current conversations related to women's ordination, ecclesial leadership and apostolate in general, as well as the overall participation of women in church. We would also like to invite papers on lessons that can be learned from the realities of ordained women's work and examples of exercising authority, in churches that ordain women or otherwise have recognized the exercise of authority by women for some time.

2. Title: Spiritual Light in the Orthodox and Quaker Spiritual Traditions (Co-sponsored with the Quaker Studies Unit)

The notion of spiritual light occurs in both Orthodox Christianity and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). For George Fox, founder of the Friends, God endows each human being with a measure of his own Divine Spirit. Fox spoke of the Inward Light, coming "from beyond"; the Inner Light is the Divine Light in every person, which guides, teaches, and leads to salvation, and brings those who accept it into unity with God and each other. Many ancient and modern Orthodox spiritual figures report experiences of God or Christ as Light, experiences understood to be Uncreated Divine Light, not created light nor psychological phenomena, and are compared with the light experienced by the Apostles at the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor (Mt. 17:1-8). This co-sponsored session will explore the sense and significance of the notion of spiritual light and the place of spiritual light in the overall theology and spirituality in the Orthodox and Quaker traditions. Emphasis will be given to proposed papers which compare and contrast explanations and descriptions of spiritual light in the two traditions, as well as actual experiences of such light by their adherents, highlighting commonalities and divergences.

3. Title: The Past and Future State of (Orthodox) Theology

Following the Volos Conference of 2010

(<https://greesons.typepad.com/paideia/2010/06/international-conference-of...>), the IOTA conference in 2019 (<https://iota-web.org/newsletters/january-2019/>) and recent key publications (Gallaher and Ladouceur 2019 and Ladouceur 2019), there has been wide-spread reflection on the past and the future state of Orthodox Christian theology in its relationship to Christian theology more broadly. We would like to invite papers and organized panels that offer

in-depth examination of Orthodox theology over the past century and a half and its future relationship to theology more broadly as a discipline. In particular, we wish to invite contributions looking at its seminal figures and their legacy (Vladimir Solov'ev, Georges Florovsky, Sergii Bulgakov, Vladimir Lossky, Dimitru Stăniloae, Alexander Schmemann, John Zizioulas, Christos Yannaras, Kallistos Ware etc.) and engaging with recent key publications: What has been accomplished by these key figures? What weaknesses have emerged in the practice of Orthodox theology as seen in its seminal figures? Is Florovsky's "neo-patristic synthesis," the dominant Orthodox theological paradigm after World War II, now *dépassé*? Should liturgy and patristic theology still play a central role in Orthodox theology? What could replace the neo-patristic synthesis? What role will the legacy of the Russian religious renaissance (sophiology, Bulgakov etc.) play in any future Orthodox theology and theology more broadly? What should be the priority themes for Orthodox theology in the coming decades? Do ecumenical and inter-religious engagement and challenges like sexual diversity, the role of women in the church, and science and technology move Orthodox theology closer to the less ecclesiastically distinct theologies produced by Western theologians? How might Orthodox theology and its key figures relate to contemporary Western theologies, historical, systematic and comparative? Our session welcomes proposals for organized panels and individual papers from scholars of any religious tradition or none, interested in exploring these issues and related other topics from historical, systematic and comparative angles.

#### Key Recent Literature

Brandon Gallaher and Paul Ladouceur, eds., *The Patristic Witness of Georges Florovsky: Essential Theological Writings* (London: TandT Clark-Bloomsbury, 2019).

Paul Ladouceur, *Modern Orthodox Theology* (London: TandT Clark-Bloomsbury, 2019).

#### 4. Title: Universal Salvation (co-sponsored with Systematic Theology Unit)

Within Orthodox Christian traditions, patristic authors have espoused varying conceptions of heaven, hell, apokatastasis, and the hope that even the devil might be eventually saved. From Origen and Isaac of Nineveh, to the modern St. Silouan the Athonite and Sergii Bulgakov, influential theologians and philosophers have questioned how beliefs in God's ultimate love and compassion might be balanced with commitments to divine justice and human freedom hypothesizing the salvation of all. Recent scholarship has prompted renewed interest in theologies of universal salvation more broadly—notably, David Bentley Hart's *That All shall be Saved: Heaven, Hell and Universal Salvation* (Yale University Press, 2019), Ilaria Ramelli's *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena* (Brill, 2013), and Michael J. McClymond's *The Devil's Redemption: An Interpretation of the Christian Debate over Universal Salvation* (Baker Academic, 2018). For this session, we invite proposals for individual papers and pre-arranged panels on all aspects of, and approaches to universal salvation. In addition to addressing theological and philosophical inquiries and scholarship related to this topic, we also welcome proposals that comparatively address universal salvation in other religions and Western Christian traditions, and in diverse forms of Orthodox Christian expression (hymns, icons, liturgical rites, lived practice, etc.).

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit focuses on the critical study of the theology, culture, history, and practices of the many different Eastern Christian churches (numbering some 260-300 million worldwide), including their mutual interaction and engagement with Western Christian and non-Christian groups.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Purpura, Ashley, Purdue University, apurpur@purdue.edu

**Chair** - Gallaher, Brandon, University of Exeter, b.gallaher@exeter.ac.uk

## Ecclesial Practices Unit

### Call Text:

#### Accountability at the Intersections of Theology and Ethnography

We invite papers addressing variations on the question: to what and to whom is a theological ethnographer accountable, and how should that accountability shape our research choices from field to text? Submissions that incorporate original fieldwork will be prioritized.

Papers addressing how the researcher's religious, denominational or confessional identity and/or their faith and spiritual practices shape their ethnographic/theological convictions are especially welcome. Such papers might query what role faith should (or should not) play in theological ethnographic projects; how particular faith commitments shape a researcher's accountability to their other communities of belonging and/or various ways of embodying identity and difference; what interpretive/analytic possibilities personal faith and theological commitments should (or should not) provide. Theological ethnographers often share more in common with their research subjects/partners than other ethnographers do – particularly because we often study 'our own'. How, then, might such relationships shape theological ethnographies at both their fieldwork and writing stages?

### Mission Statement:

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

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Ideström, Jonas, Church of Sweden, [jonas.idestrom@svenskakyrkan.se](mailto:jonas.idestrom@svenskakyrkan.se)

**Chair** - Wigg-Stevenson, Natalie, Emmanuel College, [natalie.wigg@utoronto.ca](mailto:natalie.wigg@utoronto.ca)

## Ecclesiological Investigations Unit

### Call Text:

#### Church and the Common Good

To various degrees, several recent books and articles attempt to specify the contribution churches can and sometimes do make to articulating a vision of the common good. While this is not a new area in the study of the church, it may be an especially important area of investigation at a time when many of the other institutions and structures that have historically participated in conversations about the shape of common public life have been undermined or have disappeared. For this session, we seek papers situated at the intersection of political or public theology and ecclesiology that provide fresh thinking on ecclesial involvement in projects to strengthen commitment to some understanding of the common good in pluralistic, often polarised, and sometimes outright fractious societies in the contemporary context. Among other topics papers could explore churches and ecclesial movements that have implemented the methods of community organising such as from the Industrial Areas Foundation; ecclesial leaders who call for the common good today such as Rowan Williams on overcoming political tribalism or Pope Francis on integral human development; ecclesial (re)imagining where subsidiarity, common good, communion, and ecological conversion meet such as found in Laudato Si; the articulation and promotion of the common good through Church associated organisations such as in schools, universities, hospitals, and aged care, where staff and clients are religiously and culturally diverse.

#### Current Debates on Women's Ordination to the Diaconate (Co-Sponsored Session with Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit)

At this session we would like to discuss women's ordination in various forms across churches, with the focus on those churches that are currently in debates about expanding ordination through the diaconate or other structures. The conversation surrounding the female diaconate is especially important in Orthodox Christianity (in both Eastern and Oriental traditions) and for the Catholic Church. Interest in the historical tradition of the female diaconate has prompted dialogue and controversy within Orthodox Christianity, as well as reconsideration of more recent expressions of the female diaconate where it exists. In the Catholic Church, the discussion about the female diaconate did reach a certain level of theoretical consensus, but has yet to result in any practical applications. In addition to ecclesiological aspects, we welcome proposals that explore related questions of sexuality and gender constructions, taboos, ideals, prejudices, etc. that shape current conversations related to women's ordination, ecclesial leadership and apostolate in general, as well as the overall participation of women in church. We would also like to invite papers on lessons that can be learned from the realities of ordained women's work and examples of exercising authority, in churches that ordain women or otherwise have recognized the exercise of authority by women for some time.

#### LGBTQ+ Experience as an Ecclesial Issue (Co-Sponsored Session with the Queer Studies Unit and Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit)

The reality of LGBTQ+ experience is a complex phenomenon among churches on local, regional, national, and global levels, within Methodist and Wesleyan communities as well as other

denominations and church families. That complexity has impacted the pastoral reality of churches and their self-understanding on all these levels. We invite papers that consider how LGBTQ+ people and their experiences impact churches' experiences and ecclesiologies, particularly in Wesleyan and holiness traditions but also in other churches and traditions. How are LGBTQ+ Christians changing the way we think about the church? How are LGBTQ+ experiences challenging local churches, denominational bodies, and ecumenical relationships? When it comes to tensions and even schisms, what are the competing rationales and forms of ethical discernment underlying opposing visions? What are the differing hermeneutical, historical, narrative, scriptural, traditional, social, and cultural dimensions at work? Are divisions inevitable or are new forms of understanding yet possible? In what ways have LGBTQ+ Christians functioned as a gift, an opportunity, or a challenge to envision or understand the church? What resources in Methodist and Wesleyan theology and ecclesiology, and those of other communities, might assist churches in their responses to LGBTQ+ experiences?

#### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit is a part of the Ecclesiological Investigations International Research Network, which seeks to serve as a hub for national and international collaboration in ecclesiology, drawing together other groups and networks, initiating research ventures, providing administrative support, as well as acting as a facilitator to support conversations, research, and education in this field. Hence the Network exists to promote collaborative ecclesiology. The Network's five fundamental aims are as follows:

- The establishment of partnerships between scholars, research projects, and research centers across the world
- The development of virtual, textual, and actual conversation between the many persons and groups involved in research and debate about ecclesiology
- Organizing and sharing in colloquia, symposia, and conferences
- Encouraging joint teaching and exchanges of postgraduate students and faculty
- The Unit seeks to publish the best fruits of all such collaboration in our new Palgrave Series, *Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue*, as well as in the journal *Ecclesiology* (Brill), published in association with the Network. The Network is a "network of networks" serving a "church of churches." See <http://www.ei-research.net/> for more information.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

#### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Latinovic, Vladimir, University of Tübingen, latinovic@akademie-rs.de

**Chair** - Flanagan, Brian, Marymount University, brianflanagan1@gmail.com

## **Employment Workshops**

### **Call Text:**

In an effort to offer additional programming and networking opportunities for our members, the Employment Center will host a Workshop Series during the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Are you seeking opportunities to mentor? Do you have learning, insight, or technology tips to share? Are you a wizard with social media and personal branding? Do you have an ability to create a CV from a résumé? Do you have specific advice for creating a successful portfolio and navigating the job market? Please consider leading a 60 to 90 minute workshop or intimate roundtable for 6 to 15 individuals that engages members pursuing academic and non-academic careers. We would love to have you!

Successful proposals from previous years included the following sessions:

- Alt-Ac Employment in Religious Studies and Creative Careers in Church and Faith-Based Non-Profits
- Developing a Public Voice and Making a Living from It
- Envisioning Academic Alternatives
- Job Transitions over 40 with a Ph.D.
- Marketing Matters for Academics: It's Not Just a Corporate Thing!
- Online Pedagogies and Leveraging Online Experience in the Job Market
- Religious Studies and Nonprofit Management

If you are interested in submitting a workshop or roundtable proposal, please submit a proposal through the AAR's PAPERS system at the following address: <https://papers.aarweb.org/content/employment-workshops>

All sessions will be advertised in the online and print program books.

Have questions? Contact Employment Services at [careers@aarsbl.org](mailto:careers@aarsbl.org).

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Puckett, Robert N., American Academy of Religion, [rpuckett@aarweb.org](mailto:rpuckett@aarweb.org)

**Chair** - Jackson, Marchell, American Academy of Religion, [mjackson@aarweb.org](mailto:mjackson@aarweb.org)

## Ethics Unit

### Call Text:

Our call for papers focuses on the broad issue of the American Academy of Religion's relevance to the work of religious ethics. In particular, we are interested in papers that explore how the AAR has helped shape the field of religious ethics and that identify new pathways for religious ethics to which the AAR may point.

#### Descriptions and Norms in Religious Ethics

This session invites papers that reflect upon descriptive and normative work in the study of religious ethics. How are descriptive and normative work related in religious ethics? How should they be? Does the study of religious ethics offer models or cautions for the relationships of descriptive and normative work in other fields of religious studies? Do these other fields harbor lessons for the relationships of descriptive and normative work in religious ethics?

#### Natural Science and Religious Ethics (co-sponsored session with the Science, Technology, and Religion Unit)

This session invites papers addressing the ethical significance of the natural sciences for religious traditions. Technological developments often pose obviously ethical questions for religious traditions. Do scientific developments (e.g. the Copernican revolution / evolution / Big Bang / plate tectonics) also pose ethical questions for religious traditions? If so, how? And do these scientifically induced questions differ in kind from the ethical questions that technological developments elicit?

#### The Ethics of Remembering and Commemorating the Mayflower

The session invites papers that address the moral questions that emerge as the city of Boston commemorates the 400th Anniversary of the arrival of the Mayflower and contact with the Wampanoag Nation. In particular, papers are invited that pursue ethical questions regarding historical erasure, legacies of colonization, indigenous sovereignty claims, and our contemporary "culture wars" around "Thanksgiving."

#### Religious Studies, Ethics, and the Future of the Humanities

This session invites papers that address the significance of religious studies for emerging ethical questions across the humanities. This session invites papers that engage the relevance of religious studies as an inherently interdisciplinary field to provide new methodologies for addressing ethical questions.

### Mission Statement:

This is an established Unit that has served scholars concerned in the field, others interested in the intersection of ethics, and other disciplines within the academy over an extended period of years. We believe it is inconceivable for any comprehensive study of religion to be undertaken without serious attention to the ethical teachings that are an integral part of every known religion. This Unit seeks to serve the AAR by providing a forum for the ethical interests and issues all religious traditions address. We provide the opportunity for intellectual and academic

exchange through the discipline of ethics. We encourage younger scholars and work to have a diversity of perspectives and methodologies represented from various religious traditions.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

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

**Chair** - Ringer, Christophe D., Chicago Theological Seminary, [christophe.ringer@ctschicago.edu](mailto:christophe.ringer@ctschicago.edu)

## **Evangelical Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Theme for 2020: The Breadth of Evangelical Identities

Over the previous three years our Unit has concentrated focused reflection on the definition and description of Evangelicalism with regards to its public posture, and its relationship to questions of race and ethnicity, the definition of the term “Evangelical,” and has complexified the conversation by exploring the movement’s varieties. We wish to continue to explore the breadth of Evangelical identities in ways that move into more complex descriptions and focus on the religious, political, and theological features of the movement.

As such we invite inquiries for panels or individual papers that focus attention on Evangelical varieties within a particular continent, including the identity and description of los evangélicos, or responses to the idea of Brown Church, and other new movements operating within and among the traditional Protestant/Catholic divide with new forms of embodiment and new theological and ethical emphases. Additionally, we are interested in the dynamic between languages of the church and the academy and how these enable and disable understandings of what Evangelicalism is, especially with regard to political engagement and newly formed alliances, projects, and organizations. We remain interested also in more constructive proposals that critically develop notions of evangelical intersectionality, especially as these might focus on regional distinctives of Evangelicalism in different places throughout the globe.

In addition to our allotted sessions, we are considering these co-sponsorships:

With AAR’s History of Christianity Unit, we are considering engagement with new books by Robert Chao Romero’s *Brown Church*, Jonathan Calvillo’s *Santa Ana Saints*, and other works from scholars and movements working to complexify understandings of Evangelicalism.

With AAR’s Class, Religion, and Theology Unit we are also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election.

With SBL’s Bible and Practical Theology Unit: “Evangelical, Biblical, and Political Views on the Election.”

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit is one of a very few academic professional groups specifically created for the academic study of evangelical theology without a confessional requirement for membership or participation and that seeks to be diverse with regard to gender, denomination, ethnicity, and culture. The Unit seeks to construct sessions at each Annual Meeting that address crucial issues both within the evangelical communities of North America and the world and between evangelicals and non-evangelical religious movements and theologies. The Unit sponsors sessions with theological, historical, and/or sociological foci. The Unit’s goal has always been to

stay on the “cutting edge” of evangelical thought and to cross boundaries between evangelical and non-evangelical religious communities in order to create dialogue and constructive mutual understanding.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Sexton, Jason, University of California, jason.s.sexton@gmail.com

**Chair** - Bacote, Vincent, Wheaton College, vincent.bacote@wheaton.edu

## **Exploratory Sessions**

### **Call Text:**

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 papers session, roundtable session, or other creative type of session format. Exploratory sessions are submitted through the PAPERS system, and must be submitted before March 2, 2020. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by April 1, 2020. Exploratory sessions that are accepted onto the program are then invited to submit an application for new Unit status by December 11, 2020.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

Chair - Bauman, Whitney, Florida International University, whitneyabauman@mac.com

Chair - Puckett, Robert N., American Academy of Religion, rpuckett@aarweb.org

## **Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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 also plans to invigorate feminist analyses of religious discourse within a global setting. Urgent concerns include forms of religious violence and climate crises, among others.

For the 2020 meeting, we seek proposals considering the following themes:

- 1) We are interested in exploring the role of emotion and affect in relation to social change, including racial justice, immigration, and climate change. How do feelings about the (im)possibilities of social change impact the ways we organize or fail to organize? How can studying religious affects and emotions help us better understand movements for social change? Relatedly, we are interested in exploring the role of emotional and affective labor in caregiving, especially the gendering and racialization of affect in emotional labor.
- 2) We hope to explore critical approaches to the gendering of water and fluidity and the potential use of water as a theme or analogy within feminist theory in analyzing identity, diasporic identities, religious belief, and questions of autonomy.
- 3) The Unit is also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election. Persons interested in being considered for this panel should contact the Unit's co-chairs.

### **Mission Statement:**

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

**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:**

**Chair** - Berendt, Tom, Temple University, tom.berendt@temple.edu

**Chair** - Minister, Meredith, Shenandoah University, mministe@su.edu

## Films

### **Call Text:**

Every year the AAR screens 8-12 films at the Annual Meeting, ranging from documentaries made by members as part of their research to blockbuster Hollywood films which impact the public understanding of religion. If you wish to screen a film at the Annual Meeting, please submit your proposal as a Roundtable Session and include a short description of the film, runtime, name of the director, and year it was released. Please include yourself as the presider of the session and as a panelist (as the system requires both for a roundtable session). If you wish to have a panel discussion after the film, submit the names of those panelists as well.

Preference will be given to films that tie into AAR Program Unit sessions, relate to the Presidential theme, or the Annual Meeting locale.

For any questions, please contact [annualmeeting@aarweb.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aarweb.org).

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Bauman, Whitney, Florida International University, [whitneyabauman@mac.com](mailto:whitneyabauman@mac.com)

**Chair** - Puckett, Robert N., American Academy of Religion, [rpuckett@aarweb.org](mailto:rpuckett@aarweb.org)

## **Gay Men and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We are calling for individual papers or a pre-arranged session on any subject fitting in our Unit's aim, but in particular on the following topics:

1. Identities, persons, characters: explorations of concepts like identity, personhood, or character in how they have been used / are they being used by scholars, activists and others to conceptualise the lives of (religious) gay/queer men.
2. Regimes, roles, rituals: explorations of how can certain BDSM practices illuminate certain religious practices—et vice versa.
3. An author-meets-critics session on *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique* by Sa'ed Atshan (forthcoming in summer 2020).
4. In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the release of the documentary *Paris Is Burning*, and the anticipated 3rd season of the FX TV series *Pose*, the Gay Men and Religion Unit and the Religion and Popular Culture Unit are calling for individual papers or a pre-arranged session on LGBTQ ballroom culture.
5. Trans\* and Female Masculinities: This joint session of the Men, Masculinities and Religion Unit, the Queer Studies in Religion Unit and the Gay Men and Religion Unit interrogates the relationship of trans\* studies and religious studies. We invite contributions with different theoretical, empirical, discourse-analytical, historical; decenter Christianity and/or Global North-based expressions of trans\* and religion; and engage or respond to recent issues in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2019) and *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (2018). Possible paper topics might include: transpessimism; transphobia in religious traditions and politics; disability and crip theory; ritual, materiality, and aesthetics of trans\* and female masculinities; trans\* theologies and the divine; "transing religious studies"--futures and provocations for the field.

### **Mission Statement:**

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 gay men to religious scholarship in all its forms
- Critically challenges homophobic scholarship and religious teaching, on the one hand, and aspects of the LGBTQI equality movement that promote assimilation and normalization, on the other
- Engages a variety of theoretical and political discourses, which critique essentialist notions of gay male identity
- Promotes recognition of the diversity of men-who-have-sex-with-men across time and throughout the world and investigates both the common and the particular among such persons—including their discourses around sexuality and around religion.

**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:**

**Chair** - McCarty, Richard, Mercyhurst University, rmccarty@mercyhurst.edu

**Chair** - Derkx, Marco, Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion, marcoderkx@hotmail.com

## **Graduate Student Committee**

### **Call Text:**

#### Making our Home as Scholars: Creating Spaces of Hospitality within the Academy

Inspired by this year's Presidential theme, we invite papers which explore the ways in which the academy supports, or fails to support, our scholarly lives. One aspect of support can explore the ways in which mentoring and senior scholars make and/or take space for/from junior scholars and graduate students. How and in what way(s) have mentoring and senior scholars created space, advocated for, and been pro-active in developing your scholarly, vocational, and spiritual formation?

In this forum scholars will explore the various ways in which the academy functions (or should function) as a home for us as whole persons engaged in scholarly work. We invite proposals for papers which respond to the following questions.

- How does the academy create space for new generations of scholars?
- How do marginalized scholars advocate for the creation of supportive spaces? And how has the academy responded?
- What role does hospitality play within our lives as scholars?
- What does it mean to foster a hospitable academy?
- How do scholars advocate for social changes within the academy itself?
- What obligations do we have as scholars to help foster a supportive academic community rather than simply increase scholarly output?
- How are our lives as scholars shaped by both the worlds we study and the worlds we inhabit?

We especially invite scholars to present papers in which they read their own scholarly careers as a "text" through which to illuminate issues of hospitality, community, and marginality within the academy.

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for papers which could be presented in 10-15 minutes. We hope to make this panel not merely a conversation about hospitality in the academy, but a space which itself reflects that ideal.

Please email your proposal (~250 words) and a CV to Michael McLaughlin ([mmclaughlin2@fsu.edu](mailto:mmclaughlin2@fsu.edu)) and Joseph Kim Paxton ([joseph.paxton@cst.edu](mailto:joseph.paxton@cst.edu)). Please note that this proposal does not count toward the two-proposal submission limit within the PAPERS system.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Patel, Aarti, Syracuse University, aartipatel16@gmail.com

**Chair** - McLaughlin, Michael, Florida State University, michael.mclaughlin243@gmail.com

**Chair** - Paxton, Joe, Claremont School of Theology, j.paxton@live.com

**Chair** - Jackson, Marchell, mjackson@aarweb.org

## **Hindu Philosophy Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Hindu Philosophy Unit is delighted to propose an inaugural session on the theme “Ways of Knowing.” Papers might address debates within the classical \*pramāṇa\* framework (e.g., the possibility of yogic perception, the problem of reflexive awareness, the reliability of verbal testimony, etc.), or they might suggest new topics and approaches (e.g., aesthetics and epistemology, embodied knowledge, religious experience, etc.). We welcome interpretive papers focusing on specific thinkers, texts, or schools, as well as critical papers assessing specific arguments or debates.

We also seek papers for a co-sponsored session (with Buddhist Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion) on “Religious Atheism.” The session aims to challenge the notion that atheism entails a rejection of religion; it also challenges the notion of Hinduism as theistic. Papers might explore (a) Hindu or Buddhist critiques of proofs for God's existence; (b) Hindu or Buddhist arguments for the non-existence of God; or (c) the religious dimensions of Hindu or Buddhist atheism. We hope to have two papers focusing on Buddhist materials and two papers exploring Hindu materials (e.g., early Mīmāṃsā or Sāṃkhya).

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

### **Anonymity:**

Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of Submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** – Allen, Michael S., University of Virginia, msa2b@virginia.edu

**Chair** – Patil, Parimal, Harvard University, ppatil@fas.harvard.edu

## Hinduism Unit

### Call Text:

The Hinduism Unit invites contributions on the following topics suggested at the 2019 Annual Meeting as well as on other topics consistent with the Unit's Statement of Purpose. Proposals of complete papers sessions and roundtable sessions are especially welcome, as are proposals that specify creative and efficient uses of the ninety-minute sessions that likely will make up most of the Unit's programming for the 2020 Annual Meeting. For further information about potential sessions on the topics already suggested, please e-mail the points of contact for each topic listed below:

Alternative Histories of Hinduism (Karen Pechilis, [kpechili@drew.edu](mailto:kpechili@drew.edu))

Emerging Voices / New Books in the Study of Hinduism (Harshita Kamath, [harshita.kamath@emory.edu](mailto:harshita.kamath@emory.edu) and Hamsa Stainton, [hamsa.stainton@mcgill.ca](mailto:hamsa.stainton@mcgill.ca))

WhatsApp Hinduism – Explorations in Digital Hinduism (Joel Bordeaux, [bordeauxjoel@gmail.com](mailto:bordeauxjoel@gmail.com))

Temples and Religious Architecture Outside of India (Tracy Pintchman, [tpintch@luc.edu](mailto:tpintch@luc.edu))

The Hinduization of Space in India: The Ayodhya Decision and Beyond (Knut Jacobsen, [Knut.Jacobsen@uib.no](mailto:Knut.Jacobsen@uib.no) and Archana Venkatesan, [avenkatesan@ucdavis.edu](mailto:avenkatesan@ucdavis.edu))

Women and Blood: Sabari Mala, Gender, and the Law (George Pati, [george.pati@valpo.edu](mailto:george.pati@valpo.edu))

Hinduism and Economy in Pre-Modern India (Deonnie Moodie, [dmoodie@ou.edu](mailto:dmoodie@ou.edu))

Hinduism and/in “Spirituality”: Race, Orientalism, and Cultural Appropriation Among the SBNR (Patton Burchett, [peburchett@wm.edu](mailto:peburchett@wm.edu))

White Nationalism, Hindu Nationalism: An Exercise in Comparison (Patton Burchett, [peburchett@wm.edu](mailto:peburchett@wm.edu))

Hinduism in the World Religions Classroom: Pedagogical Techniques and Strategies (Deonnie Moodie, [dmoodie@ou.edu](mailto:dmoodie@ou.edu))

The Study of Hinduism in the 21st Century: Innovative Theoretical and Methodological Approaches (Patton Burchett, [peburchett@wm.edu](mailto:peburchett@wm.edu))

Global Hinduism Beyond the “Diaspora” (Tracy Pintchman, [tpintch@luc.edu](mailto:tpintch@luc.edu))

Hinduism, Embodiment, and Emotion (Diana Dimitrova, [diana.dimitrova@umontreal.ca](mailto:diana.dimitrova@umontreal.ca))

Representations of Hinduism in Theater and Film (Diana Dimitrova, [diana.dimitrova@umontreal.ca](mailto:diana.dimitrova@umontreal.ca))

Queer Hinduism/LGBT Hinduism in North America and Beyond (co-sponsored with North American Hinduism Unit). contact: Tanisha Ramachandran, [ramacht@wfu.edu](mailto:ramacht@wfu.edu)

The North American Hinduism and Hinduism units (co-sponsored session) seek papers that address LGTB+ issues as they are embraced, rejected, condemned, and/or celebrated in Hinduism. Potential topics for papers include: LGTB+ acceptance/rejection in Hindu texts and

practice, queer theory and the study of Hinduism, homonationalism and pink washing, LGTB+ rituals, Hinduism and homonormativity, transgressing/upholding gender boundaries and norms.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit was established in 1997 with the mission of providing a forum within the AAR for the academic study of Hinduism as a distinctive world religious tradition including, but not limited to the geographical region of South Asia. The Unit seeks to foster research on all periods and registers of Hindu texts and practices through the presentation of new data, critical analysis, and interpretative strategies, based on textual, sociohistorical, ethnographic, philosophical, theological, and theoretical studies. We are particularly interested in forging connections between the study of Hinduism and other areas of religious studies, and we welcome proposals from scholars in the field that can provide such connections.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Burchett, Patton, College of William and Mary, [peburchett@wm.edu](mailto:peburchett@wm.edu)

**Chair** - Moodie, Deonne, University of Oklahoma, [dmoodie@ou.edu](mailto:dmoodie@ou.edu)

## History of Christianity Unit

### Call Text:

The History of Christianity Unit continues to encourage chronological depth and geographic breadth in the study of Christian histories. Generally, unless otherwise noted, we invite papers and panel sessions that address the issues suggested in this Call for Proposals across time periods. We also continue to invite papers or full panels on topics and periods not explicitly mentioned in the following:

#### 1. Race in the Middle Ages

As a potential co-sponsorship with the Religion in Premodern Europe and the Mediterranean Unit, this panel invites papers on the topic of Race in the Middle Ages. We have witnessed in the past few years that symbols, texts, and ideas of the Middle Ages have been deployed by white nationalist groups to promote racist notions of superiority and purity. Recent books including Geraldine Heng's *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* and M. Lindsey Kaplan's *Figuring Racism in Medieval Christianity* are clear calls to critically examine the logics, political histories, and mobilizations of this era. We seek to organize an interdisciplinary panel to further this discussion.

#### 2. Teaching the BIG Christian History Survey Course

Many of us in the academy are often called upon to teach a one-term course that is intended to be a historical introduction to Christianity. It's no secret that all who teach such a course recognize its numerous limitations and constraints. For this panel, we invite educators who have modified, in some way, the course beyond the usual paradigms that take us from Antioch to America, a version of the course that is unduly influenced by Western Protestantism. This panel will convene five to seven scholars to share for ten minutes each on the kinds of approaches they have taken to make such a broad course more inclusive of Christianity's extraordinarily diverse past that all too often falls to the wayside. Inclusivity can range from content to approaches, archives, experiential learning, and digital humanities teaching. We will give preference to panelists who commit to utilizing the audio/visual resources on site. We encourage proposals from a diverse range of institutional setting (e.g., small seminars, large lectures, online courses, etc.).

#### 3. Colonialism

Our meeting's conference in Boston occasions us to reconsider colonial and colonizing narratives in the history of Christianity. Over the past several decades historians and theorists have challenged colonial projects such as received "origins" stories. Given our conference's location to be held in such close proximity to the famed Plymouth Rock (1620) of the Pilgrim's landing, we are compelled to invite papers which critically examine the use of monumental markers (dates, objects, texts, proclamations, etc.) as comparative touchstones of origins accounts. As such we invite conversations about pre-, de-, and post- colonialism and the narration of origins.

“Whose origins?” we might ask, and how does such a rendition help us to better understand an inclusive history of religious movement. Specifically we invite panels and papers that consider the questions concerning the following: how do we narrate origins, namely the church’s colonizing origins texts? How can our sources and archives better orient us to disentangle the elements of pre-, de-, and post- colonialism. We are open to all periods of the History of Christianity.

#### 4. Religion and Anthropology Unit

With the Anthropology of Religion Unit, we invite co-sponsored papers and panels at the methodological crossroads of history and anthropology on the theme: “Of Pilgrimages and Objects: What History and Anthropology can Learn Better Together.” While the topic of “lived religion” has gained increasing currency in historical and ethnographic research, we seek to push the conversation further by identifying key elements of how concepts from the two disciplines find productive overlap in current research. Heeding to works such as Caroline Walker Bynum’s *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*, we also encourage papers that draw out insights of pre-modern religious cultures around pilgrimages and objects.

#### 5. Religion and Historical Elections

As a co-sponsored session between Religion and Politics and the History of Christianity units, this panel seeks to foster an interdisciplinary discussion on the relationship between religion and historical elections. This session seeks papers that address how religion has influenced historical elections at the various levels of government. We are open to all periods of American history and encourage proposals historically rooted before the 21st century. We ask: what historical examples can we turn to better understand the relationship between religion and elections, and how can this help us understand the present moment?

#### 6. The 1619 Model: Rewriting Christian History

We invite papers and panels that take inspiration from the New York Times 1619 Project, edited by Nikole Hannah-Jones. Extraordinary in its inclusion of different genres (poems, stories, essays, and personal narratives) and use of various media (print, podcast, and online teaching modules), the 1619 project offers a new account of American history, while offering a more general model for reinterpreting history. The history of Christianity itself does not have a prominent role in the 1619 project, apart from glancing reference to slavery as America’s original sin. This omission raises important questions. How might a focus on Christianity cast new light on this project? On analogous projects? More generally: What is the role of religion in reimagining history? Is it simply a matter of the events we highlight, and the people we include? Or is there something specific to religion, to the focus on Christianity, specifically, that might inspire new histories, and new interpretations of old histories? Papers and panels might situate themselves in relation to particular elements of the 1619 project, or orient themselves in relation to the broader theoretical questions above, by focusing on different historical

narratives. We invite experimentation and play in these proposals, including the use of myriad genres; consideration of pedagogical alongside historical and theoretical questions; or diverse interpretations of a single historical artifact or event. Traditional papers and panels will also be considered.

#### 7. Brown Church History and Sociology

With AAR's History of Christianity Unit we are considering engagement with new books by Robert Chao Romero's *Brown Church*, Jonathan Calvillo's *Santa Ana Saints*, and other works from scholars and movements working to complexify understandings of Evangelicalism.

#### 8. Religion and the 2020 Election- Roundtable session co-sponsored Across Units

In addition to the co-sponsored panel, our Unit is also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election.

#### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of this Unit is to deepen and broaden the study of the Christian past by presenting innovative and engaging research on the history, culture, and development of Christianity from its origins to the present, while at the same time promoting interdisciplinary dialogue among the fields of history, religious studies, ritual studies, art history, anthropology, and historical theology. We have a strong commitment to providing a showcase for the work of both younger and established scholars in the field.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

#### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

#### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Beckman, Trish, Saint Olaf College, beckman@stolaf.edu

**Chair** - Barba, Lloyd, Amherst College, lbarba@amherst.edu

## **Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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

Global South perspectives on transhumanisms

Surveillance technologies

Ethnographic and anthropological methods in transhumanism and religion

Climate change, enhancement, and transhumanisms

Animal liberation and transhumanisms

Additional constructive proposals for the future of religion and technology

Co-sponsored session: The Death, Dying and Beyond and the Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Units invite paper proposals for a cosponsored panel on the intersection and paradoxical connection between the technological advancements in regards to extending and maintaining human life and the accompanying increase in the use of technology to create space/platforms for mourning practices and expressions of grief. Are humans immortalized by and through these technologies? If so, how? How do these technologies affect the experience and expression of grief? How do these technologies affect perceptions of the afterlife or the beyond? How does transhumanism as an emerging field speak to, intersect with, affect death and dying studies? Ethics within death and dying? How has/might religious practice change to incorporate technology (e.g. especially if you exist forever within an online platform)?

### **Mission Statement:**

"Transhumanism" or "human enhancement" refers to an intellectual and cultural movement that advocates the use of a variety of emerging technologies. 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. If these enhancements become widely available, it 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. To be placed on a very occasional mailing list, contact Calvin Mercer, East Carolina University, [mercerc@ecu.edu](mailto:mercerc@ecu.edu).

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - DeBaets, Amy Michelle, Hackensack University Medical Center,  
[amy.debaets@gmail.com](mailto:amy.debaets@gmail.com)

**Chair** - Mercer, Calvin, East Carolina University, [mercerc@ecu.edu](mailto:mercerc@ecu.edu)

## **Indian and Chinese Religions Compared Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This year we plan to explore the relationships between art, literature, and religion in India and China. We will be holding one traditional papers session and one experimental session:

#### **1. Religious Narratives and Visual Arts**

This will be a traditional papers session. We seek individual papers (rather than fully formed panels) exploring the relationship between religious narratives and visual arts (sculpture, murals, mandalas, illuminated manuscripts, etc.) in India and China. Comparative proposals are welcome, as are proposals focusing exclusively on India or China (so long as the material is accessible to a broader audience).

#### **2. Religion, Literature, and Global Humanities**

This will be an experimental session. The goal is not to present specialized research, but to initiate a conversation between scholars working on religion and literature in India and scholars working on religion and literature in China. What might the study of Indian literature have to offer to scholars of Chinese literature, and vice versa? What challenges are distinctive, and what challenges are shared? How might Indian or Chinese reading practices and literary theory contribute to the global humanities more broadly? The session will begin with a brief statement from each panelist, but the majority of the time will be devoted to open discussion. In lieu of a traditional paper proposal, we ask potential panelists to provide a description of their work, its relation to the field of religion and literature more broadly, and their vision of the global humanities. Potential panelists should also suggest one or two literary examples they might share with a non-specialist audience to illustrate their work.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit addresses two significant gaps in current scholarship on Chinese and Indian religious traditions. The first gap is in historical scholarship. India and China have been the two mother cultures of South Asia and East Asia. Historically, the two were connected through the transmission and transformation of Buddhism from India to China. This remarkably fruitful incorporation and assimilation of a foreign system of thought and cultural practice into another well-established civilization is one of the first of its kind in the human history of cross-cultural exchanges, especially at such a magnitude. Unfortunately, there has been inadequate scholarly attention paid to how Indian Buddhism — and its central Asian variants — introduced new issues and imaginations to the Chinese people and how the Chinese managed to appropriate the alien tradition into their own intellectual milieu, hence deeply enriching and reshaping the indigenous Chinese culture. Beyond Buddhism, we encourage comparisons between other native Indian and native Chinese traditions. Second, we also seek to redirect some of the attention of the comparative study of religion and philosophy away from the default Western-centered approach. India and China are profoundly important civilizations, both historically and contemporarily. Despite the historical connection of Buddhism, the differences in their cultural

products — whether religious, linguistic, philosophical, artistic, or material — are so striking that comparing them would highlight the true richness, plurality, and diversity of human creativity and cultural productivity.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** – O'Brien-Kop, Karen, University of Roehampton, [karen.obrien-kop@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:karen.obrien-kop@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Chair** - Lusthaus, Dan, Harvard University, [lusthaus@g.harvard.edu](mailto:lusthaus@g.harvard.edu)

## **Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit**

### **Call Text:**

1. CO-SPONSORED SESSION: African Diaspora Religions Unit, Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, Native Traditions in the Americas Unit, and Teaching Religion Unit

Call for Papers: How to Teach Indigenous Religious Traditions

Heeding Linda Tuhiwai Smith's call to center contemporary Indigenous politics, spiritual protocols and authorship within research methodologies, this co-sponsored session will feature papers and demonstrations on teaching Indigenous religious traditions. Presenters will pre-circulate their pedagogical papers prior to the AAR meeting. Their written approach will be in close conversation with contemporary Indigenous methodologies, teachers, activists, writers, and intellectuals. At the 2020 AAR Boston session, panelists will speak for five minutes and then briefly demonstrate their approach to teaching specific Indigenous religious traditions.

2. CO-SPONSORED SESSION: Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit and Religion and Ecology Unit

Call for Papers: Indigenous Ecologies: Indigenous Nature Relationships, Rights, and Climate Change

In contrast with settler colonial modes of consumption and objectification, Indigenous Peoples often hold relationships with the natural world as integrated into kinship, reciprocal, and spiritual networks. In a global context, what are ways that Indigenous Peoples conceive of and maintain these natural relationships? How do Indigenous authors, intellectuals, and languages shape of these relationships? In light of climate change, what are political, legal and spiritual evolutions to these Indigenous ecologies? Successful papers will integrate Indigenous language, philosophies and ecological activism.

3. Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit

Call for Papers: Indigenous Reproductive Rights, Pregnancy, Birthing, and Child-Rearing Practices

This call asks for papers that explores the Indigenous community and women's traditions of pregnancy, birthing, child-rearing practices and reproductive rights.

4. Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit

Call for Papers: Contemplative Indigenous science and practice

The emergent field of contemplative studies—and its manifestation as the mindfulness movement—draws inspiration mostly from Buddhist-derived meditation practices, texts, and principles. These practices have been largely adopted in the West as a popular source for health-related benefits. While these practices have been pertinent and effective, they only represent a selected variety of practices across religious traditions. Moreover, the benefits of these practices for only physical and psychological well-being do not represent the higher resolve of realization of spiritual goals. Indigenous religious traditions have likewise engaged in a diversity of contemplative practices with similar spiritual impact, and physical and psychological benefits. This panel invites proposals that engage with Indigenous contemplative

practices (pilgrimage, ceremony, ritual, story, etc.) to advance the range of contemplative studies that includes Indigenous wisdom traditions. Moreover, we seek to bring contemplative traditions in dialogue for particularities and common ground.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit focuses on theoretical, methodological, and conceptual issues in the study of indigenous religious traditions the world over. 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. This Unit also emphasizes Indigenous Methodologies among other Humanities and Social Sciences approaches. The Unit is also 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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Estrada, Gabriel, California State University, Long Beach, gabriel.estrada@csulb.edu

**Chair** - Schermerhorn, Seth, Hamilton College, jscherme@hamilton.edu

## **Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Program Unit invites proposals for individual papers on the question “Is chaplaincy the future of American spiritual/religious leadership?”

The question, which intends to spark dynamic conversation among practitioners, educators, and researchers, will help the program Unit address a wide variety of pertinent topics, including:

- Sectors in need of chaplains and the needs of organizations seeking spiritual care for employees, students, etc.
- Demographic diversity from chaplaincy education through clinical training and leadership
- The function of chaplains in multifaith environments
- Decolonization from historically Christian hegemony in chaplaincy education and clinical pastoral education
- The wellbeing of chaplains in circumstances that may be conducive to moral distress or moral injury
- The impact of social science research on chaplaincy and dialogue between researchers and practitioners

Informing all of these discussions are a number of ongoing trends in American religion and spirituality, including:

- Shifts in American religious demographics
- Organizational and relational models of chaplaincy
- Cultural connotations of chaplaincy and the broader public's understanding of chaplains' work

### **Co-Sponsored Session: Moral Injury and Moral Distress in Chaplaincy (with Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Unit)**

- How does the literature on moral injury and moral distress offer important and different contribution to the work of spiritual care and chaplaincy?
- How are chaplains, as care professionals, subject to moral injury and moral distress in the midst of their professional responsibilities and institutional contexts?

### **Co-Sponsored Session: Issues in Chaplaincy (with Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit)**

In partnership with the Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit, we invite individual papers and panel proposals that address intersections of chaplaincy and interreligious studies. We are particularly interested in the following questions:

- How can we identify sites of demand for chaplaincy and spiritual care and help connect spiritual caregivers to those in need?
- How can we decolonize the historical Christian hegemony in chaplaincy education and CPE?

- How can chaplaincy training become more inclusive of diverse spiritual lifestances—learning not only about different religious and secular traditions but also from them?
- How can we also productively engage the broad range of communities in which chaplains may be working?

**Mission Statement:**

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 extend and make permanent the conversation begun through an exploratory session held at the AAR in November 2018. Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care breaks 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Cadge, Wendy, Brandeis University, [wcadge@brandeis.edu](mailto:wcadge@brandeis.edu)

**Chair** - Skaggs, Michael, Brandeis University, [mskaggs@brandeis.edu](mailto:mskaggs@brandeis.edu)

## **International Development and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Theologies and ideologies of faith-based humanitarianism and development

In this panel we are interested in papers that explore how faith-based humanitarian and development organisations navigate their faith identity within the ostensibly secular space of the global aid business. The faith-based humanitarian and development sector has grown rapidly over the past 20 years. However, there is evidence that these organisations secularise their discourse at the global level as part of their 'mastery of the development language' which, to quote from Olivier de Sardan's book *Anthropology and Development*, 'is their ticket for entry into an international network, access to the developmentalist configuration and therefore to the promise of funds and projects' (2005, 183). At the same time, though, these organisations do not completely lose their faith identity and their theologies and ideologies continue to shape their work. At the global level there are certain issues around which particular faith actors sometimes coalesce (e.g. reproductive health and sexual rights) and make their faith perspective felt even without explicit recourse to religious arguments. And with their supporters and at the local level, the explicit use of a faith register is a distinct advantage, to bring in funding and to connect with local beneficiaries who have a strong faith identity. There can also exist ideological and theological diversities embedded within different institutional approaches to humanitarian and development practice. This panel is interested in exploring how faith-based humanitarian and development organisations negotiate, (re)configure and communicate their theologies and ideologies in the multiple interactions that shape their work.

Possible co-sponsored panel between International Development and Religion Unit and Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit:

Faith in the humanitarianism-development-peace nexus

An outcome from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) was the 'New Way of Working' (NWoW), which means that humanitarian, development and peace actors are recommended to work together (the 'triple nexus') 'to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each sector to reduce need, risk and vulnerability...in accordance with the 2030 SDG agenda' (Relief Web, no date). The NWoW recognises that although humanitarian, development and peacebuilding are different activities, they are fundamentally linked and organisations focusing on one or more of these should adopt a combined approach to programming (Oxfam 2019). While this is gaining traction in practice and academia, to date the role that religion and faith actors play has been largely overlooked. There is little focus on religion and faith actors in literature on the NWoW despite evidence that local peacebuilding, development and humanitarian actors, including those that are faith-based, often naturally adopt an integrated approach, but are hampered by a siloed approach to these activities, bolstered by conventions around how donor funds can be used. This panel is interested in papers that explore the ways that faith actors, from international faith-based organisations to local faith actors, approach the humanitarianism-

development-peace nexus, the barriers they face and what needs to be done in order to overcome them.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

Papers of sufficient quality will be considered for publication in an edited volume on the same or similar theme for the Routledge Research in Religion and Development book series. (see [<http://ow.ly/FGEJb>])

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Rees, John, University of Notre Dame, Australia, [john.rees@nd.edu.au](mailto:john.rees@nd.edu.au)

**Chair** - Tomalin, Emma, University of Leeds, [e.tomalin@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:e.tomalin@leeds.ac.uk)

## **Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit is committed to equity. If you are submitting a panel proposal, diversity of spiritual lifestances (aka religions) is of primary importance. We also consider gender, ethnic and racial diversity to be significant, and value voices from scholars at various points in their careers.

#### **Decolonizing and Resetting the Interfaith Table**

We invite individual papers or panel proposals to continue last year's productive discussions around decolonization as an ongoing practice. How have historically dominant agents and understandings of religion predetermined the composition and experiences of the interfaith "table"? Who sits, and to what effect, at decolonized interfaith tables? How might queer theory and other liberative approaches be used to interrogate the categories of religion and the effects of marginalization?

The interdisciplinary nature of this program Unit provides an opportunity to inspect particular cognitive and religious frameworks – past and present – and their tendency to colonize space and marginalize persons. This includes, among other possibilities:

- well-worn liberal and conservative dichotomies
- pluralist/inclusivist/exclusivist categories
- the nature of boundaries
- views of what qualifies as religion, power, and authority

We invite papers which decolonize interfaith spaces and experiences, and reset interfaith tables.

#### **Interactive Workshop**

We invite brief presentations (10 minutes) designed to stimulate substantive conversation on critical issues in Interreligious and Interfaith Studies and engagement. Based on the success of last year's interactive workshop model, we specifically encourage proposals that address:

- Techniques in teaching case studies
- Interdisciplinary approaches to Interreligious Studies
- Teaching interreligious Studies in homogenous contexts
- Co-curricular strategies
- Comparative studies in Interreligious Studies courses
- Competencies in the field, including suggested course sequences and learning outcomes
- Decolonizing the Interreligious Studies classroom
- Mistakes in the classroom and what we learn from them
- Addressing child vulnerability and well-being
- "Productive discomfort" in interreligious engagement
- Recent publications in the field

Presentations unfold at separate tables, with attendees selecting the conversations in which they would like to participate. There will also be opportunities for networking with colleagues who teach in similar contexts (liberal arts college, university, seminary, etc.).

### **Co-Sponsored Session: Issues in Chaplaincy**

In partnership with the Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit, we invite individual papers and panel proposals that address intersections of chaplaincy and interreligious studies. We are particularly interested in the following questions:

How can we decolonize the historical Christian hegemony in chaplaincy education and CPE? How can chaplaincy training become more inclusive of diverse spiritual lifestances—learning not only about different religious and secular traditions but also *from them*? How can we also productively engage the broad range of communities in which chaplains may be working, and give greater consideration to the ways chaplains are received?

What are the particular functions of chaplains in multifaith environments? How have frameworks rooted in Christian models of faith and practice shaped the roles of chaplains and spiritual caregivers in these spaces? With the dynamic interrelationship of theory and praxis, how might various contexts of multifaith chaplaincy help reimagine the field?

### **Mission Statement:**

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

**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:**

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

**Chair - Salem, Feryal**, American Islamic College, [fsalem@aicusa.edu](mailto:fsalem@aicusa.edu)

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

### **Call Text:**

- (Re)Conceptualizing the field: Scholarship at the margins of Islam and gender -

This IGW workshop session focuses on conceptualizing the field of Islam and gender, and Islamic studies more broadly, through scholarship at or about the margins of these fields. IGW encourages submissions that center critical race theory, queer theory, transsexuality studies, and decolonial approaches. We especially welcome submissions that deconstruct normative categories (e.g. hegemonic constructions of the Muslim, gender binary, heteronormativity), that propose new categories and theoretical approaches, and that center the voices of marginalized communities.

In keeping with our commitment to non-traditional programming, the session will be organized as a workshop, with discussion tables formed around those pre-circulated readings. Therefore, IGW is not accepting proposals for standard conference papers or for prearranged paper panels. Rather, we solicit proposals from those who would like their recently published or forthcoming article or chapter of a book to serve as a basis for a discussion at the session.

Although we have a strong preference for scholars proposing their own work, we are also willing to consider proposals to serve as table facilitator for a discussion of another scholar's published work. Should such a proposal be accepted, we would then also encourage the author to attend and participate in the session.

- Proposals to IGW for this session need to include:

- an abstract of the piece
- a clear explanation of the contribution the piece makes to the field and how it might help to initiate a discussion on the further development of the field of Islam and gender
- the length of the full piece
- its status in the publishing process (if published, details; if forthcoming, where; etc.) and whether it forms part of a larger project (especially if it is a chapter from a monograph)
- suggestions for possible facilitators for discussion of the piece at the workshop

### **Approximate Timeline:**

March 2: Proposals due through the PAPERS system

March 9: IGW requests full text of articles/chapters/books from finalists before making final selections

August 30: Discussion tables and themes will be announced

September 15: Readings will be posted on the AAR website (accessible for registered participants) and registration for tables is opened

- Co-sponsored session with the Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit

This year, the Islam, Gender, Women Unit also welcomes submissions for a co-sponsored session with the Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit.

Feminist methods and attention to gender within Islamic studies are well established. Scholars and activists have contributed to inquiries into the politics of visibility, homonationalism, decolonialism, gender representation, and the veil (e.g., Jasbir Puar, Saba Mahmood, and Ranjana Khanna). However, as a method and politics lesbian-feminisms remains underrepresented. Outside of religious studies, feminist theorists Sara Ahmed, Robyn Wiegman, and Jennifer Nash critique progress narratives that denigrate lesbian-feminisms; instead, they call for a return to this corpus in order to build a more just society. We are interested in what this might mean for Islamic studies. How might lesbian-feminisms and Islamic studies mutually inform each other? Scholars such as Gabeба Baderoon, Jin Haritaworn, Shanon Shah, Poala Bacchetta, and Krupa Shandilya explore the intersection of lesbian-feminisms with the field of Islamic studies. Proposals might build upon their insights, or propose new possibilities, concerns, and aims. We are especially interested in proposals from scholars of color, graduate students, contingent faculty, and queer and trans scholars.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Howe, Justine, Case Western Reserve University, justine.howe@case.edu

**Chair** - Yacoob, Saadia, Williams College, saadia.yacoob@williams.edu

## **Islamic Mysticism Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Islamic Mysticism Group solicits paper and panel proposals for the 2020 AAR Annual Meeting. All proposals related to Islamic mysticism, as described in the above “Statement of Purpose,” are welcome. This Unit encourages proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable discussions in all areas related to Islamic Mysticism, including but not limited to contemporary and classical Sufism, Isma’ili and broader Shi’i mysticism, the esoteric and occult arts, aspects of Islamic philosophy and mystical hermeneutics. Proposals must engage with existing scholarship, show theoretical sophistication, and offer original research. Pre-arranged sessions are especially encouraged, but must show diversity of gender to be considered. We also greatly encourage other forms of diversity, especially race, ethnicity, theoretical method, and rank. Authors of accepted proposals are expected to attend the annual meeting and will be barred from future programs if they fail to show, special and emergency circumstances aside. Any proposals related to the above topics will be considered. For the 2020 meeting in Boston, we also encourage submissions on the following topics, which were formulated during the 2019 AAR Islamic Mysticism Group business meeting:

- Approaches to Hagiographies
- Religion and Psychology, Cognitive Sciences, and Affect Theory as Approaches to the Study of Islamic Mysticism
- Guilds in Islamic History and their Relationship to Sufi Orders
- Mysticism and Ecology
- Islamic Mysticism, Politics, and Social Justice
- Sufism and Empire, including issues related to Globalization and Nationalism
- Gendered Constructions, including the study of Masculinity
- Comparative Mysticism: Mysticism in Islam and in Other Religious and Philosophical Traditions
- The Musical and Ritual Performance of Religion

### **Mission Statement:**

Islamic mysticism is a broad rubric, one that allows us to engage in areas such as Sufism, Isma’ili and broader 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 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Zargar, Cyrus, University of Central Florida, cyzargar@gmail.com

**Chair** - Dakake, Maria Massi, George Mason University, mdakakem@gmu.edu

## **Jain Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Jain Studies Unit is not accepting proposals for the 2020 AAR; our panel has been determined. However, we are open to co-sponsorship. Anyone interested in co-sponsoring with the Jain Studies Unit should contact either of the co-chairs.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Kelting, Mary Whitney, Northeastern University, [m.kelting@northeastern.edu](mailto:m.kelting@northeastern.edu)

**Chair** - Vose, Steven, Florida International University, [svose@fiu.edu](mailto:svose@fiu.edu)

## **Japanese Religions Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We invite papers sessions, individual papers, and roundtables that address all aspects of Japanese religious practice and thought. All time periods welcome. To facilitate maximal exchange within and beyond Japanese religions, we prefer proposals that include explicit reflection on the study of religion more broadly. Creative formats are encouraged (film, organized discussion, pre-circulated papers/texts, workshop, etc.).

Our Unit is committed to diversity and inclusion. We strongly encourage considering balance in terms of gender, and areas of specialization and time periods, as well as balance between graduate students, junior scholars, and senior scholars. Showing little or no regard for such diversity will exercise an adverse effect on the likelihood that your proposal will be accepted.

In submitting proposals, please follow the AAR guidelines carefully. First-timers are encouraged to contact the co-chairs for additional advice (Asuka Sango at [asango@carleton.edu](mailto:asango@carleton.edu); Levi McLaughlin at [lmclaugh2@ncsu.edu](mailto:lmclaugh2@ncsu.edu)).

Next year's AAR theme is "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild." José Cabazón, AAR president in 2020, has suggested that, because the AAR is looking back on more than fifty years as an association, and a century since its founding as the National Association of Biblical Instructors, now is a suitable time to reflect on our disciplinary formation. Of course, proposals need not be limited to this theme.

Our Unit has two options: (a) one 2.5 hour session and one 2 hour session; or (b) one 2 hour session and two 90 min sessions. Co-sponsorship adds one 90 min session to this allotment. We aim to sponsor more 90 min sessions to allow more people to participate. Please keep this in mind as you compose your proposal.

Also, we would like to remind you about the Women in the Study of Asian Religions (WISAR) website (<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/find-scholars/>). Some of us attended the Buddhism section, "Fostering Diversity in the Study of Asian Religions," and learned that "this website was created to facilitate greater representation of women in scholarly activities by providing a crowdsourced list of female scholars working in Asian Religions." We encourage everybody to use this website to go beyond old networks to seek new ones, as suggested at the Fostering Diversity panel, and to help us further strengthen our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Below are possible topics proposed by our members this year. We welcome proposals on other topics as well. Please contact the proposers if you are interested in participating in these proposals:

- New research on new religious movements in Asia (Tim Smith, UNC-Chapel Hill [tjwsmith@live.unc.edu](mailto:tjwsmith@live.unc.edu)).
- Problematizing “Japan” in colonial religious experience in imperial Japan (Daigengna Duoer, UC Santa Barbara [daigengna@ucsb.edu](mailto:daigengna@ucsb.edu)).
- Vengeful spirits, ghosts, and other non-kami and non-buddha entities in Japanese religions (Takashi Miura, University of Arizona [tmiura@email.arizona.edu](mailto:tmiura@email.arizona.edu))
- Wasan (和讚) as a genre in Japanese religions (Christopher Callahan, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign [ctc@illinois.edu](mailto:ctc@illinois.edu)).
- Before Shintoization: The Social Reality of Kami Shrines, Rituals, and Myths in Classical and Early Medieval Japan (Ethan Bushelle, Western Washington University [ethan.bushelle@wwu.edu](mailto:ethan.bushelle@wwu.edu))

For possible co-sponsorship with the Japanese Religions Unit and the Society for the Study of Japanese Religions. The Society for the Study of Japanese Religions hopes to sponsor a professional development workshop for early career scholars. In particular, we seek junior and mid-career professionals who have successfully navigated the job market (both in and out of academe). We seek mutual mentors who can share their life hacks, helpful hints, war stories, and sense of humor as they advise others through the major hurdles of job applications, interviews, negotiating contracts, revising the diss-to-ms, preparing the tenure portfolios, establishing work-life balance, etc. Other suggestions are most welcome.

Contact Pamela Winfield [pwinfield@elon.edu](mailto:pwinfield@elon.edu), Levi McLaughlin [lmclaug2@ncsu.edu](mailto:lmclaug2@ncsu.edu), Asuka Sango [asango@carleton.edu](mailto:asango@carleton.edu).

#### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

#### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

#### **Leadership:**

**Chair -** McLaughlin, Levi, North Carolina State University, [lmclaug2@ncsu.edu](mailto:lmclaug2@ncsu.edu)

**Chair** - Sango, Asuka, Carleton College, [asango@carleton.edu](mailto:asango@carleton.edu)

## Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Unit

### Call Text:

#### Kierkegaard, the Problem of Patriarchy and Related Social Ills

Sarah Grimké, a 19th-century American feminist and contemporary of Kierkegaard, astutely noted that patriarchy, particularly as the rule of white males in Western Christendom, sat at the intersection of an array of social ills in the United States, not simply at the heart of relationships between men and women. As she advocated for the immediate abolition of slavery, she soon learned that the same power that had its "foot on the necks" of white women, including ones from wealthy families like hers, also had its "foot on the necks" of enslaved and free black men, women and children, as well as male and female laborers of all ethnicities.

In *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard seems to have understood this dynamic as well, at least to some degree. He criticizes the abuse of power characteristic of Christendom's patriarchal culture, both broadly in terms of the powerful dominating the weak, and specifically in terms of the relationship between men and women. Kierkegaard bases his analysis of such "misrelations," to use his pseudonym Anti-Climacus' term from another text, on a critique of individuals divinizing themselves and their interests at the expense of others and on a philosophy and theology of selfhood stressing the authenticity and integrity of the individual "before God."

Whether explicitly religious or not, a wide variety of 20th-century thinkers critically engaged Kierkegaard's emphasis upon the authenticity of the individual as they grappled with the injustices of Christendom's traditional institutions and discourses. This includes, but is not limited to, Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon, Hannah Arendt, Richard Wright, Cornel West, and Judith Butler. Like these figures, recent scholars in political theology have continued this critical engagement with Kierkegaard by offering new interpretations and applications of his thought.

Other scholars of the 20th- and 21st-centuries, however, have not been so sanguine about the anti-patriarchal and more broadly egalitarian dynamic in Kierkegaard's works. They have interpreted him as patriarchal himself, as well as misogynistic, anti-Semitic, and elitist or classist---all problems that connect him to the power structures he purportedly critiques. Given some of his own remarks, these interpretations are not without justification. Indeed, feminist Kierkegaard scholars, many of whom are mostly positive about the Dane, have long taken him to task for his views on women.

To what extent, then, can Kierkegaard illuminate and help to correct the problems of patriarchy and related forms of oppression, if he was in any sense a proponent of, as well as a beneficiary of such power structures? How can Kierkegaard help us to identify, analyze, confront and combat patriarchy and the injustices produced by related power structures, such as sexism, racism, classism, and other social ills, if he was himself guilty of some of these offenses? Is there something unique in Kierkegaard's thought that can still contribute to the critique of patriarchy and its cognates, in spite of his embroilment in them? What are the limits of Kierkegaard's ability to function as a legitimate resource for creating a less patriarchal and power imbalanced society?

We invite papers that engage these questions from a variety perspectives and approaches.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Barrett, Lee, Lancaster Theological Seminary, lbarrett@lancasterseminary.edu

**Chair** - Veninga, Jennifer, St. Edward's University, jennv@stedwards.edu

## Korean Religions Unit

### Call Text:

The Korean Religions Unit welcomes proposals for papers 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.

For KRU Standalone panels:

"The Experience of Women in Religious Leadership in Korea"

Organizer: Eunsu Cho ([escho@snu.ac.kr](mailto:escho@snu.ac.kr))

"Religion and Rights and Anti-Rights Advocacy in Korea" (Animal rights, refugee rights, Anti-refugee rights, Disability rights, LGBT rights, women rights, Anti-immigration rights, etc.)

Organizer: Tim Lee ([t.lee@tcu.edu](mailto:t.lee@tcu.edu))

Co-sponsored with the Religion and Popular Culture Unit:

"Korean Popular Culture and Religion"

Organizers: Minjung Noh ([tuf64799@temple.edu](mailto:tuf64799@temple.edu)); Hyemin Na ([hyemin.na@gmail.com](mailto:hyemin.na@gmail.com))

The session intends to focus on:

Korean Pop Music (K-pop) and religion, including the religiosity of global K-pop culture, transnational receptions of K-pop in diverse religious settings, intersections of gender, race, religion, and K-pop, etc.

Korean cinema and religion, including cinematic representations of Korean religious culture, perspectives on world religions in Korean cinema, role of religion in Korean film production and consumption, etc.

Any other papers that address the relationship between Korean Popular Culture and Religion as broadly construed.

### Mission Statement:

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Torrey, Deberniere, University of Utah, djtorrey@gmail.com

**Chair** - Kim, Hwansoo, Yale University, hwansoo.kim@yale.edu

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

### **Call Text:**

We solicit papers in the following 4 areas of study. Additionally, anyone who wishes to organize a panel on a subject not listed below may contact one or both of the Unit's co-chairs to propose the panel.

- We invite papers for a co-sponsored session that connects religion, the Latina/o Americas, and human rights—with particular attention to genocide and genocidal acts. We invite analyses of ways in which governments and religious institutions influence one another in their conceptualizations of and justifications for violence. We are interested in proposals that evaluate Holocaust comparisons and connections. For example: the rhetorical force and practical implications of referring to the Guatemalan genocide as "the silent Holocaust"; debates concerning the description of U.S. border detention centers as "concentration camps"; the 2016 opening of a Holocaust Museum in Guatemala; and the 2018 meeting of the Latin American Network for Education on the Holocaust and Genocide. Additionally, we are particularly interested in papers that attend to the intersections of religion and authoritarianism, human rights, and post-conflict reconciliation and healing. For example: the roles that religious leaders played in the 1996 Guatemalan Peace Accords; the reactions of religious communities to Efrain Rios Montt's genocide and crimes against humanity conviction in 2013; the ritual practices surrounding Ixil Mayan genocide victims, particularly mourning and funerary practices without a body (the disappeared) or an identifiable body (mass graves); the November 2019 lawsuit submitted by Rohingyas and Latin American groups in Argentina under the principle of "universal jurisdiction"; the mass killing of Machupe peoples of Chile in the late 19th-century and their ongoing struggles; the Catholic Church and "Dirty War" of the 1970s and 80s in Argentina; and how Catholics, and increasingly, Evangelicals and Pentecostals, have defended human rights or contributed to coup attempts and human rights abuses in Latin American countries. Likely co-sponsor: Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide\*. \*Papers accepted for this session will be considered by Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal for possible inclusion in a focus issue.
- We invite paper proposals for a co-sponsored session titled, "Tracing Religion in Chicanx/Latinx Studies - Genealogies, Contributions, Interlocutors, Omissions." This session aims to analyze and assess histories and contemporary trends in the study of religion within the fields of Chicanx and Latinx Studies. Proposals may address the following or related questions: How have contributions from "major figures" and approaches within Chicanx/Latinx Studies shaped the study of religion over the past five decades? What, if any, "schools of thought" have developed in the study of religion within Chicanx/Latinx Studies? What influences and asymmetries exist in engagements between Chicanx/Latinx Studies scholars and scholars doing work in Constructive Theologies? How has Chicanx/Latinx Studies been shaped by the disciplines of theological and religious studies? What are recent trends and emerging approaches to the study of religion within Chicanx/Latinx Studies? What thematic and disciplinary possibilities remain underdeveloped or ignored in the study of religion within

Chicanx/Latinx Studies? Likely session co-sponsors include the following Unit: Religions in the Latina/o Americas.

- We invite invite papers for a multi-Unit sponsored session titled, "The Labor of Black, Brown, Yellow, and Indigenous Racialized Bodies in/and U.S. Religious Traditions." Historical, ethnographic, sociological, theological, and critical theory methods are all welcome. Likely session co-sponsors include Class, Religion, and Theology; Religions in the Latina/o Americas; Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society. Proposals may address the following or related questions:
  - How does the concept of *labor*, with its multiple connotations of both economic production and social reproduction, offer a useful way to make sense of black, brown, yellow, and indigenous racialized bodies' participation in U.S. religious traditions?
  - What distinct kinds of labor have brown, indigenous, yellow, or black racialized people been expected to perform in our own religious communities and/or in predominantly white religious communities?
  - How has labor (productive and/or reproductive) been a site for religious expression and/or resistance to oppression by indigenous, yellow, black, or brown racialized bodies?
  - How have labor hierarchies and the labor of subordinated racial groups been sacralized?
  - How is the religious labor of yellow, black, indigenous or brown racialized people further unequalized by hierarchies of gender and sexuality?
- We invite papers for a session engaging the ways in which social and cultural ecologies of the U.S./México borderlands region and of diaspora communities contribute to and/or challenge scholarship on the field of Religion and Ecology (religious environmentalism and green religion) in the United States, in light of the AAR/SBL 2020 proposed theme that is "more inward-looking and self-reflective." As we witness increased media coverage of various religious communities of color engaging in water conservation, food sovereignty, and public policy, the question arises: How anti-racism and anti-sexism in environmental movements and religious imaginaries inform the study of religion? What might the study of religion look like if these contexts are seriously engaged as knowledge-producing, and not merely as objects of research? For example, Amanda Baugh in her forthcoming article, "*Nepantla* Environmentalism: Challenging Dominant Frameworks for Green Religion" (JAAR), has claimed that a focus on Latinx environmentalism "calls attention to the raced and classed biases embedded in dominant understandings of green religion in the United States" and challenges the Enlightenment framework that has "privileged the actions of progressive white activists" who view nature through a Western lens. We invite papers on religion and ecology that engage with race relations and structural racism, and/or with the religious and ecological dimensions of immigration, migration, and asylum.

#### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Guerra, Lauren Frances, Loyola Marymount University, laurenguerra18@gmail.com

**Chair** - Gallardo, Ángel Jazak, Southern Methodist University, ajgallardo@smu.edu

## **Law, Religion, and Culture Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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 in Asia, Africa, Europe, or the Americas, including legal categories in religious traditions, the treatment of religion within legal traditions, human rights, and freedom of religion. We welcome explorations of “formal” law that directly intersects with states and “informal” law that does not.

This year, our Unit particularly invites proposals that address the following broad themes:

**U.S. Women’s Suffrage and the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment:** 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution. We invite papers examining religion and women's suffrage, as well as the intersection of women, religion, and voting over the last 100 years.

**Criminalization of Religious Communities and Practices:** We encourage papers on the criminalization of religious practices and religious communities, with an eye toward case studies across the historical and geographical spectrums.

**Religion and Family Law:** Globally, the category of “family law” demarcates a privileged legal realm for religious communities while, at the same time, being a venue for some of the trickiest (and most heartbreak) instances of religious-legal conflict. We’re seeking a wide range of approaches to—and treatments of specific case studies in—the problems of “religion” as a category within (both creating and created by) family law, worldwide.

**The Power of Paper: Bureaucracy’s Materiality**—From notary stamps to the census, the bureaucratic devices of the law hold privileged roles in various religious communities. Seen as authoritative, dangerous, dehumanizing, or eschatologically essential, documentation—from visas to taxpayer identification numbers, licenses, certifications—and other material markers of jurisdiction—from courtroom flags to the threshold outside a polling place—become subjects of concern and contestation. We’re looking to assemble a range of papers using various methodological approaches to analyze case studies on religious communities’ imagination and engagement with the power of paper. Contemporary, historical, and global examples are all encouraged.

**Decolonized Law:** What does “law” (that marker of colonial hegemony) look like when it is used against, or even imagined as an alternative formation to, colonialism? We seek to draw examples and approaches from indigenous and decolonial legal practice and theory worldwide, privileging those actively theorizing the riddle of “law” at odds with hegemonic understandings and applications of the legal. (Possible joint session with Native Traditions in the Americas Unit)

**Necropolitics and the Rule of Law:** camps, detention centers, state-sanctioned assassinations and weaponized borders provide a lens onto how the rule of law is overtaken by a politics of death. A death through active forms of killing and passive form of letting die; at once unjust and politically sanctioned these moments beg the question if the pervasive forms of necropolitics

are within the rule of law and ethically unjust or outside and in need of a better rule of law. Given that the causalities include many civilians, minors, refugees and at times even citizens unluckily racialized, the rule of law as a form of justice is called into question. We are interested in papers that approach both the confluence of rule of law with necropolitics and that study rhetoric of justice linked to various modes (illegal, ethical, moral, and religious) of protest against such unjust laws. Further, we strongly encourage papers that conceptualize death and killing in its various forms, social, political, legal and not just limited to physical death.

Corruption. How does religion impact what is seen as corruption, or not? Related topics might include: corruption outside of North America; the notion of laundering money through religious activity/organizations/concepts; policies that enable or cultivate what might otherwise be seen as corruption (Possible joint session with Religion and Economy Unit)

Legal concepts of personhood, including corporate personhood (Potential joint session with Religion and Economy Unit)

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Dew, Spencer, Denison University, spencerdew@gmail.com

**Chair** - Gray-Hildenbrand, Jenna, Middle Tennessee State University, jenna.gray-hildenbrand@mtsu.edu

## **Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

What is distinctive about lesbian-feminist methodology? In *Living a Feminist Life*, Sara Ahmed writes, "in order to survive what we come up against, in order to build worlds from the shattered pieces, we need a revival of lesbian feminism" (213). After revisiting critiques of lesbian-feminism, Ahmed asserts that lesbian-feminism is necessary for our present political moment. It is a methodology, she argues, that integrates public and private by imparting the tools needed to interpret lived experiences. For Ahmed, "queer experience might be better articulated as lesbian experience or something women in particular experience" (215). The terms "queer" and "intersectionality" have been embraced in the study of religion as useful and malleable concepts. However, if we heed Ahmed's suggestion with Jennifer Nash (*Black Feminism Reimagined: after intersectionality*) and others, the over use of these terms de-centers the very populations that they were coined to illuminate such that feminism becomes entrenched in a progress narrative; lesbian-feminism is presumed to be passé, the term "women of color" expands Black feminism, and so on. Rather than regulating knowledge as property, Ahmed and Nash invite readers to return to the purpose and value of feminism. Lesbian-feminism and Black feminist theory's visionary world-making possibilities are at stake. Ahmed and Nash's insights suggest that scholars of religion engage in the creative process of imagining and advancing something new. We invite critical and constructive papers that engage Ahmed and Nash's scholarship to consider lesbian-feminist methodologies old and new for the study of religion, pedagogy, and activism. Topics might include affect, embodiment, complaint, killjoy, defensiveness, love ethics, crip theory, trauma studies, decoloniality, performance art, positive psychology, happiness studies, pleasure activism. We are especially interested in proposals from underrepresented populations.

### **Co-sponsored session with Islam, Gender, Women Unit**

Feminist methods and attention to gender within Islamic studies are well established. Scholars and activists have contributed to inquiries into the politics of visibility, homonationalism, decolonialism, gender representation, and the veil (e.g., Jasbir Puar, Saba Mahmood, and Ranjana Khanna). However, as a method and politics lesbian-feminisms remains underrepresented. Outside of religious studies, feminist theorists Sara Ahmed, Robyn Wiegman, and Jennifer Nash critique progress narratives that denigrate lesbian-feminisms; instead, they call for a return to this corpus in order to build a more just society. We are interested in what this might mean for Islamic studies. How might lesbian-feminisms and Islamic studies mutually inform each other? Scholars such as Gabeba Baderoon, Jin Haritaworn, Shanon Shah, Poala Bacchetta, and Krupa Shandilya explore the intersection of lesbian-feminisms with the field of Islamic studies. Proposals might build upon their insights, or propose new possibilities, concerns, and aims. We are especially interested in proposals from scholars of color, graduate students, contingent faculty, and queer and trans scholars.

**Mission Statement:**

For over 25 years this Unit has been committed to lesbian-feminism in the study of religion. Whether pursued through religious studies, social-scientific, historical, or theological methods during the approach to the academic study of religion, lesbian-feminist scholarship challenges hegemonic discourse within gay, lesbian, and queer movements that function to privilege queer theory as capable of eclipsing theories and methodologies that are explicitly feminist in the face of entrenched patriarchy and self-consciously lesbian in the face of persistent maleness and heteronormativity. We are especially committed to scholars and scholarship that advance people of color, persons with disabilities, decoloniality, and economic justice. This is accomplished with diverse and timely themes, and by providing a theoretical space for probing and further developing the openings and opportunities afforded by changing sociopolitical and theoretical contexts.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair - Wolff**, Michelle, Augustana College, michellewolff@augustana.edu

**Chair - Bloesch**, Sarah, Elon University, sbloesch@smu.edu

## Liberation Theologies Unit

### Call Text:

Title: "The Canon of Liberation and Theology"? Boundaries, Tensions, and Ties

In the theological academy, certain areas of study, including liberation theology, have constructed a canon that establishes a tradition of reflection, praxis, and innovation. This canon grounds and orients the guild's work, often gathering the seminal works in a particular area of study, as well as the methodologies of original thinkers and practitioners. Innovation through the years is carefully curated by these original thinkers, understood to be guardians of the tradition. These canons and the processes by which they come about represent hard boundaries from which scholars and practitioners interact with the academy and the larger world.

What constitutes the canon of liberation theology(ies)? This year the Liberation Theologies Unit invites proposals that examine this question and the complexities embedded within. Which processes form canons? Who has shaped these canons? How do we construct our syllabi for courses related to liberation and theology?

Proposals for two sessions are encouraged that examine the ways the theological academy - 1) privileges the written word over other forms of knowledge; 2) privileges Judeo-Christianity as systematized traditions; and 3) privileges those educated in particular traditions of learning, such as academia. What tensions and challenges do Indigenous, Native, Islamic, Afro-Caribbean, African and other religious practices and alternative canons of knowledge bring to the Western theological academy on the topic of liberation? How do these challenges impact methods, epistemologies, and frameworks for the work and praxis of liberation? In what ways does solidarity at the margins in post-secular and post-religious contexts invite the revision and even deconstruction of certain canons? In what ways do these offer new ties to seminal works in the liberationist tradition?

Topics may include:

Fetishism of the written word, revolutions, and discomfort

Activism as the real work of the guild

Religious persecution

Indigenous storytelling, alternative concepts of time, and kairos

Tensions generated by colonized theologies and the guild

The use of literature and art for the study of liberation theologies

Ethnonationalism and the texts of national canons of revolution

Interreligious and grass roots forms of doing liberation theologies

Tension and role of gender in theological constructions of a canon for liberation

How do we engage the canon of the poor?

Archives that include the non-written word

Transgressions of the boundaries

Role of the subjective, objective and inter-subjective in forming theologies of liberation

Role of identities (or not) in forming liberation theologies

Co-sponsored session (Liberation Theologies Unit and Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit and Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit and Comparative Theologies Unit)

Title: "Land, Revolutions, and the Religious Being: in Search of Political Theologies of Liberation"  
We invite proposals for a co-sponsored session that consider the setting of the 2020 meeting in Boston by examining the relationship between revolutions and land (i.e., Hong Kong, Chile, Paris, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, etc.) in different ways. Possible areas include post-colonial and decolonial critiques of comparative theology and theologies of peace and conflict resolution; theology intersecting at the borders of geography and confessionalism; learning and activism across those same borders; comparative theologies as praxis/therapy for overcoming the impact of tolerance, hate, and conflict; political theologies of liberation in relation to conflict, land and various industrial-complexes (prison, ecological, technological, military, etc.).

The Liberation Theologies Unit is also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election. Persons interested in being considered for this panel should contact the Unit's co-chairs.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair - Cooper, Thia,** Gustavus Adolphus College, [tcooper@gac.edu](mailto:tcooper@gac.edu)

**Chair - Davila, Maria T.,** Merrimack College, [mariatdavila@gmail.com](mailto:mariatdavila@gmail.com)

## Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit

### Call Text:

#### *The Global and Alternative Luther and His Relevance for Today*

The early 21st century has witnessed a surge of titles indicating an interest in reframing Luther and Lutheranism for the contemporary world. Examples include: The Alternative Luther, Liberating Lutheran Theology, *Lutherrenaissance* Past and Present, Transformative Lutheran Theologies, The Global Luther, Reformation Theology for a Post-Secular Age, The Forgotten Luther (I and II), etc.

We invite papers that address the question of Martin Luther's relevance for the global world today. How has this focus on a Luther fit for the 21st century shaped apprehensions of a 16th century former Augustinian monk? What in Luther's life and thought has shaped reflection and engagement in the world today? Should we be apprehensive about making use of a 16th century thinker for 21st century challenges? We are especially interested in submissions for those who have contributed to such volumes, and/or use them in classrooms, or beyond. We also welcome proposals engaging these questions from multiple disciplinary approaches.

### Conjoint CFP with the Religious Conversions Program Unit

#### *Conversion and Deconversion across the Globe*

The growth of Christianity in the Global South raises questions concerning the nature of conversion: How has global migration impacted the phenomenon of conversion itself, both individually and socially? Is conversion re-construed when a religion's adherents migrate? Does conversion then admit, for example, the possibility of Multiple Religious Participation? How does conversion en masse affect the social fabric of communities? The Religious Conversions Program Unit and Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Theologies Program Unit invite proposals focusing on the phenomenon of conversion in light of globalization and migration. We especially welcome proposals engaging multiple disciplinary approaches.

### *Roundtable Session*

#### Book Panel, John D. Caputo's *Cross and Cosmos: A Theology of Difficult Glory* (Indiana University Press, 2019)

In his recent book, the hybrid philosopher/theologian John D. Caputo turns his creative work to none other than Martin Luther's theology—from Luther's reflections on the life of a theologian of the cross to God's hiddenness, *Deus absconditus*. Pointing towards the *Heidelberg Disputation* (1519), Caputo expresses a desire: "My hope is to let this revolutionary text speak to us anew." In that way, *Cross and Cosmos* offers a rich reflection on Luther's theology but also presses into places where Luther might not have imagined: a radical theology of the cross, were the "passion of the cross is the figure of compassion" that extends out to, in fact, a theology of creation. Thinking about the complexities of reconciliation, cosmology and the poetics of the

cross alongside the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, Jacques Derrida, James Cone, Delores Williams, Catherine Keller and others, Caputo's book produces a theology of "difficult glory" that enhances his earlier writing in *The Weakness of God* (2006) and *The Insistence of God* (2013). This book review panel involves John D. Caputo responding to a the following global panel of Luther scholars and theologians: Jake Erickson, Sigridur Gudmarsdottir, Anthony Bateza, and Marit Trelstad.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit seeks to provide an avenue for a comprehensive conversation on both Lutheran history and thought in the global context. In so doing, it is able to draw on an immensely rich tradition that goes far beyond Lutheran parochial interests as it includes the relationship to other Christian traditions as well as cultures in the global South.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Jorgenson, Allen G., Wilfrid Laurier University, ajorgenson@luther.wlu.ca

**Chair** - Kvam, Kristen E., Saint Paul School of Theology, kriskvam@spst.edu

## **Men, Masculinities, and Religions Unit**

### **Call Text:**

#### **1. Title: Trans\* and Female Masculinities:**

This joint session of the Men, Masculinities and Religion Unit, the Gay Men and Religion Unit, and the Queer Studies in Religion Unit interrogates the relationship of trans\* studies and religious studies. We invite contributions with different theoretical, empirical, discourse-analytical, and historical approaches; that decenter Christianity and/or Global North-based expressions of trans\* and religion; and engage or respond to recent issues in the *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2019) and the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (2018).

Possible paper topics might include:

- transpessimism
- transphobia in religious traditions and politics
- disability and crip theory
- ritual, materiality, and aesthetics of trans\* and female masculinities
- trans\* theologies and the divine
- "transing religious studies"--futures and provocations for the field

#### **2. Roundtable Panel on Toxic Masculinity and Religion**

The Men, Masculinities, and Religion Unit is seeking papers for a roundtable-style panel on the theme of toxic masculinity and religion. We are particularly interested in religious and secular identities and how they shape the enactment, embodiment, and contours of toxic masculinities both in the U.S. and globally. We seek to understand the relationship between toxic masculinity and hegemonic masculinity, and the various modes and spheres in which toxic religious masculinities are manifested and performed cross-culturally. We invite proposals for short 8-10 minute papers/provocations on the following topics:

- theorizing toxicity and toxic religious masculinities
- toxic masculinity in the popular imagination and public sphere
- hypermasculinity
- masculinities and politics
- masculinity, atheism, and non-belief
- masculinities online/on social media
- toxic masculinity and hegemonic masculinity
- masculinities and social movements
- white supremacy and toxic masculinity

#### **3. Catholic Men and Masculinities –**

A joint session of the Roman Catholic Studies Unit and the Men, Masculinities, and Religion Unit invite historical and ethnographic papers that explore gender, masculinities, and the making of men in Catholic spaces. We seek papers that think explicitly about the processes of Catholic formation, power, materiality, and gender together to examine the lives of clerics, priests,

seminarians, and lay men. We especially invite papers that explore transnational and global Catholic masculinities and papers on the following topics: (1) sexual abuse, masculinity, and power; (2) clerical masculinities and the lives of priests; (3) masculinities in/and seminarians; (4) the materiality of Catholic masculinities (vestments, costumes, objects, rituals, devotions); (5) lives of lay men (religious organizations, ritual, parish life, masculinities, and the family); and (6) the practice of gay, queer, trans, non-binary Catholics.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides a forum within which the phenomenon of masculine gender – as identity, practice, discourse, and structure – is examined, 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Maldonado-Estrada, Alyssa, Kalamazoo College, [amaldona@kzoo.edu](mailto:amaldona@kzoo.edu)

**Chair** - Jones, Linda G., University of Pompeu Fabra, [linda.jones@upf.edu](mailto:linda.jones@upf.edu)

## Middle Eastern Christianity Unit

### Call Text:

#### *Middle Eastern Christians and Pedagogy—Past and Present*

The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit is soliciting papers addressing the topic of pedagogy as it relates to Middle Eastern Christians throughout history. The topic is conceived broadly, to include education in all its senses, such as: teaching, school formation, book production, scholarship, and theories of knowledge, within Middle Eastern Christian communities. This Call for Papers is issued in the spirit of the 2020 AAR conference theme of '*the Academy as a Scholarly Guild*,' and thus we would encourage proposals to suggest some connections between their research on Middle Eastern Christian traditions, and the modern academy as a guild. Proposals must present a clear thesis, explain the theoretical and methodological approaches of the research, and identify a specific body of evidence that the research will interpret. The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit encourages and promotes the inclusion of all scholarly voices, and invites proposals from scholars of all ethnic/national backgrounds, genders, professional ranks, disciplinary perspectives, and life circumstances.

#### *Middle Eastern Christianity and Gender*

The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit invites paper proposals that address topics relevant to gender and Middle Eastern Christianity. The M.E. Christianity Unit welcomes proposals from all academic fields of study (sociology, psychology, history, literary theory, ritual studies, etc.) as they are applied to Middle Eastern Christians in any of their communities throughout history, whether in their native lands, or as immigrants throughout the world. Successful proposals must present a clear thesis, explain the theoretical and methodological approaches of the research, and identify a specific body of evidence that the research will interpret. The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit encourages and promotes the inclusion of all scholarly voices, and invites proposals from scholars of all ethnic/national backgrounds, genders, professional ranks, disciplinary perspectives, and life circumstances.

#### *Middle Eastern Christianity and Others in the City of the Late Antique East*

The Middle Eastern Christianity and the Traditions of the Late Antiquity East Units invite paper proposals that analyze Middle Eastern Christians in the city. This call is open to broad interpretation, such as: interaction with other religious communities, civic visions, city life, public engagement, civic movements, and any other ways that M.E. Christians have interpreted or engaged the city. The Call for Papers is open to scholarship from all academic fields. Successful proposals must present a clear thesis, explain the theoretical and methodological approaches of the research, and identify a specific body of evidence that the research will interpret. The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit encourages and promotes the inclusion of all scholarly voices, and invites proposals from scholars of all ethnic/national backgrounds, genders, professional ranks, disciplinary perspectives, and life circumstances.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Womack, Deanna, Emory University, deanna.f.womack@emory.edu

**Chair** - Andraos, Michel, Catholic Theological Union, mandraos@ctu.edu

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

### **Call Text:**

For the 2020 AAR Annual Meeting, we invite papers or complete panels on:

#### **Moral Injury and Sexual Trauma**

Sexual trauma can generate moral injury, especially when the victims have been betrayed by a person in a position of authority, such as in the military, in religious communities, in educational institutions, and medical care. How did scholars so far engage the Moral Injury of sexual trauma? How can people be supported in understanding and engaging this kind of Moral Injury in culturally sensitive and intersectional ways? How do different communities engage the Moral Injury of sexual trauma? How can racism aggravate the experience of sexual trauma?

#### **Moral Injury as Societal, Systemic, Communal Issue**

Moral Injury is not a merely individual problem but has systemic and communal dimensions that remain understudied. What scholarship can better equip us in addressing the often overshadowed societal dimensions of Moral Injury? Does Moral Injury entail an inherently political critique, as claimed by Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon?

#### **Co-sponsored with the Innovations in Chaplaincy Studies and Spiritual Care Unit:**

How does the literature on moral injury and moral distress offer important and different contribution to the work of spiritual care? How are chaplains, as care professionals, subject to moral injury and moral distress in the midst of their professional responsibilities and institutional contexts?

#### **Co-sponsored with the Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit and the Religion and Disability Studies Unit:**

We invite proposals at the intersection of psychology, religion, trauma, and disability on the threats, experiences, and care for those experiencing trauma effected by violence and/or moral injury, particularly persons with disabilities, veterans, survivors of diverse violences, and other vulnerable populations.

### **Mission Statement:**

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 anguish 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Moon, Zachary, Chicago Theological Seminary, [zachary.moon@ctschicago.edu](mailto:zachary.moon@ctschicago.edu)

**Chair** - Lettini, Gabriella, Starr King School - Graduate Theological Union, [glettini@sksm.edu](mailto:glettini@sksm.edu)

## **Mormon Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Mormon Studies Unit seeks proposals for full sessions or individual papers that consider any aspect of Mormon experience using the methods of critical theory, philosophy, theology, history, sociology, or psychology. This includes the use of Mormonism as a case study for informing larger questions in any of these disciplines and, thus, only indirectly related to the Mormon experience. We are also interested in papers that reflect on the globalization of Mormonism.

For 2020, we are especially interested in proposals that might be appropriate for co-sponsored sessions with the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Unit. Possible topics for papers might be theological or area studies oriented as well as historical. Scholars might consider the ways in which the spirit and/or the concept of the trinity is considered in both groups, how each group approaches issues of gendered attire and modesty, how modest apparel is marketed to each group, where either group fits in the category of evangelical, and the impact of each group on post-war politics.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Patterson, Sara**, Hanover College, [patterson@hanover.edu](mailto:patterson@hanover.edu)

**Chair - Petrey, Taylor**, Kalamazoo College, [tpetrey@kzoo.edu](mailto:tpetrey@kzoo.edu)

## **Music and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We welcome paper and panel proposals on all subjects that relate music to religion. The section is eager to cultivate scholarship in music and religion from a wide array of religions, time periods, and cultural practices. To that end, for the 2020 meeting in Boston, we are particularly seeking

1. Proposals for a joint session with the Native Traditions in the Americas Unit on the intersection of Native American religious traditions and music.
2. Papers and panel proposals on music in Confucian Traditions
3. Papers that address the musical impact of the 400th year anniversary of the landing of settler-colonialist English Pilgrims at Plymouth
4. Proposals for a book panel on Alisha Lola Jones' *Flaming?: The Peculiar Theopolitics of Fire and Desire in Black Male Gospel Performance* (Oxford University Press)
5. The 100th year celebration of Charlie Parker's birth.
6. 50 year anniversary of The Grateful Dead's "American Beauty."
7. The centenary for two pieces of Western art music with important religious resonances across the twentieth-century: Gustav Holst's suite "The Planets" and Ralph Vaughn Williams' "The Lark Ascending."
8. The Arts, Literature and Religion Unit would like to co-sponsor a panel on "U2 / Irish spirituality and popular music."
9. Following the 2020 conference theme: how musical creativity and performance can be valued as scholarship within our field.
10. Other topics of interest include music and mysticism; music in and among spiritual responses to the current global environmental crisis; how music is present in interfaith contexts; music and conversion; ethical perspectives on music and embodiment.

### **Mission Statement:**

The discipline of religious studies is expanding beyond linguistic rationality to include the importance of musical phenomena in the development of healthy 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Jones, Alisha L., Indiana University, [jonesall@indiana.edu](mailto:jonesall@indiana.edu)

**Chair** - Rycenga, Jennifer, San Jose State University, [jennifer.rycenga@sjsu.edu](mailto:jennifer.rycenga@sjsu.edu)

## **Mysticism Unit**

### **Call Text:**

#### **1) Mysticism and Ecology:**

While nature mysticism is a familiar category within the family of mysticisms, this session intends to look more broadly at the issue of ecology and mysticism. Submissions for this theme might consider mysticism's relationship to climate change, ecological activism, the environmental sciences, or earth-based religions.

#### **2) "Feeling Mysticism":**

Often, the role of non-discursive faculties, especially emotion, are emphasized in mystic practices and experience. And while love features prominently among these, other emotions – such as fear, awe, or even hate – are sometimes also prevalent. This session seeks papers that address the role of feelings and emotion in mysticism, and especially those that consider affective modes that are less familiar in mysticism.

#### **3) New Perspectives on Mysticism:**

The field of religious studies has seen something of a fluorescence of methodological innovations lately: affect theory, new materialism, cognitive science, and other approaches are offering new perspectives on the study of religion. This panel asks what these new theoretical perspectives have to offer (or, perhaps, what they don't have to offer) to the study of mysticism in particular.

#### **4) Mystical Imagination:**

The imagination has long played an important role in mysticism, often functioning as one of if not the essential faculty by which mystical knowledge or experiences are facilitated. This session seeks submissions that deal with the mystical imagination: How does it operate? In what ways does the mystic train or harness her imagination? What is the role of this particular faculty in the mystic's practice or experience?

#### **5) Mystical Food and Mystical Consumption:**

For a possible co-sponsorship between the Mysticism Unit and the Religion and Food Unit, this session seeks papers focusing on mystical consumption, including not only the idea of food, drink, or other forms of consumption as mystical practices, but also the idea of the mystic herself as food, or as what is consumed.

### **Mission Statement:**

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, 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/>.

**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

We do NOT accept proposals by email.

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Gleig, Ann, University of Central Florida, ann.gleig@ucf.edu

**Chair** - Blum, Jason N., Davidson College, jnblum09@gmail.com

## **Native Traditions in the Americas Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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 on institutional self-reflection, we seek proposals for a panel considering the work of Professor Inés Talamantez, and her influence on the study of Native American religious traditions within the academy.
- \* Indigenous pedagogies and their application in the Native American Religious Studies classroom.
- \* The intersection of Native American religious traditions and music, for a joint session with the Music and Religion Unit.
- \* The impacts of climate change on Native American religious traditions, and/or how Native American traditions provide means of responding to the climate crisis.
- \* Native American religions and cultures after the Trump era.
- \* "Decolonization and the law," for a joint session with Law and Religion. Papers might consider issues such as the implications of "sincerely held religious beliefs," and the colonial legacies of the legal system.
- \* The challenges of the insider/outsider binary: our responsibilities to communities, and/or the intersection of work in community and work in the academy.
- \* For a joint session with African Diaspora Religions Unit, Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, and Teaching Religion Unit. Heeding Linda Tuhiwai Smith's call to center contemporary Indigenous politics, spiritual protocols and authorship within research methodologies, this co-sponsored session will feature papers and demonstrations on teaching Indigenous religious traditions. Presenters will pre-circulate their pedagogical papers prior to the AAR meeting. Their written approach will be in close conversation with contemporary Indigenous methodologies, teachers, activists, writers, and intellectuals. At the 2020 AAR Boston session, panelists will speak for five minutes and then briefly demonstrate their approach to applying Indigenous pedagogies within the teaching of specific Indigenous religious traditions.
- \*For a possible quad-sponsorship with the Native Traditions of the Americas Unit, the Women and Religion Unit, the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit, and the North American Religions Unit, we invite proposals that interrogate the role of both religious history and myth in producing and sustaining Indigenous erasure and genocide. We particularly encourage proposals that consider history and myth of the Mayflower, including commemorations like Mayflower 400, in relation to the destruction of the Native Wampanoag Peoples, and the disruption of the Wampanoag matrilineal line. We also invite proposals that further explore the impact of settler colonialism in and beyond the United States, especially those that analyze religion in relation to the genocide of indigenous peoples from a gender perspective in the North American context, including North America in relation to other contexts affected by European settler colonialism (i.e., Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Islands). Proposals that interrogate the widespread killings and disappearance of indigenous women and girls as a form of genocide (e.g., the June 2019 Canadian National Inquiry) are welcome.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Crawford O'Brien, Suzanne J., Pacific Lutheran University, [crawfosj@plu.edu](mailto:crawfosj@plu.edu)

**Chair** - McComb Sanchez, Andrea, University of Arizona, [amccomb@email.arizona.edu](mailto:amccomb@email.arizona.edu)

## New Religious Movements Unit

### Call Text:

The New Religious Movements Unit welcomes all papers that address research pertinent to the study of marginal, emergent, "alternative," innovative, "invented," or minority religions. In particular, we encourage submissions on the topics

- addressing racism and white supremacy in/and NRMs
- immigration and NRMs (especially but not exclusively during the 2020 election year)
- religious innovation, activism, and protest
- rage, fear, emotion, and affect in the study of emergent and innovative religions
- new religions and the material culture of Boston
- NRMs and conspiracy theories
- a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion and Science Fiction Program Unit, considering new religious movements in tandem with the theories or tropes of science fiction, including a wide range of critical approaches
- a possible co-sponsored session with the Afro-American Religious History Unit/New Religious Movements Unit engaging alternative religious movements/cultures including but not limited to:
  - the anniversary of Daddy Grace's United House of Prayer for all People (1919)
  - African-Americans and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
  - African-Americans and Unitarianism/Transcendentalism

We are especially interested in papers that forefront concerns of race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability within these topics.

*Note:* New Religious Movements is particularly interested in proposals for full panels, but strongly encourages scholars to familiarize themselves with existent NRM scholarship while preparing their proposals. We also expect that the composition of proposed panels will reflect the lived diversity of the Academy. When preparing your proposal, please include the demographic data you provide to the AAR and explain how your panel's participants instantiate academic diversity.

### Mission Statement:

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.

We, the Steering Committee of the New Religious Movements Program Unit, affirm our solidarity with the Muslim scholars of the American Academy of Religion and the Society for

Biblical Literature, with Muslim Americans, and with those seeking refuge and asylum in the United States.

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 than can result when federal and state agencies fail to recognize the humanity of marginalized religious groups.

We condemn in the strongest terms Mr. Trump's executive order purporting to "protect the American People from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals".

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/us/politics/refugee-muslim-executive-...>

We reject the premise that punitive exclusions of any religious group based on the actions of extremist members make any American safer or freer. We affirm the commitments of our country's first president, who saw in our nation the promise of a government "which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

Cognizant of increased travel and personal safety concerns, we are further committed to offering scholars video conferencing options as an alternative means of participation on all New Religious Movements panels at the American Academy of Religion's 2017 national meeting and in the future, should similar needs arise.

We are resolved to make space for difference both within the academy and beyond.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair – Laycock, Joseph, Texas State University, joe.laycock@gmail.com**

**Chair - Willsky-Ciollo, Lydia, Fairfield University, lciollo@fairfield.edu**

## Nineteenth Century Theology Unit

### Call Text:

#### - Women Shaping Theology and Religion in the 19th-Century

We are seeking paper proposals on the following themes: (1) Women's role in the development of the domains of theology and religion in the 19th century and how each has come to be conceived; (2) How recognizing women's contributions to theological/religious discourse when these occurred outside the formal theological discipline, e.g., in literary works, makes us rethink cultural categories and disciplinary boundaries; (3) Women whose contributions to or critiques of 19th century theology/religion have been insufficiently acknowledged; (4) Reconceiving the canon of 19th-century religious thinkers in the light of the participation of women; and (5) since we are in Boston, papers treating Margaret Fuller or New England women are particularly welcome.

#### - Academic Rivalry in the Modern Age: Thinking with Girard and Beyond

For a joint session with the Colloquium on Violence and Religion, we invite proposals that explore academic rivalries in the nineteenth century. Almost no leading figure in the period was free from the entanglements of academic rivalry. Various social and political factors, e.g. war, territorial realignment, nationalism, the proliferation of learned journals, the restructuring of universities, and more, created a rich soil for rivalries to grow. The mimetic theory of René Girard offers an interesting interpretive lens for understanding rivalry. Girard not only identifies rivalry, but attempts to explain its roots through his mimetic theory: rivalry stems as much from similarity as from difference; if unchecked, it will escalate and often end in bloodshed.

Proposals might: (1) Revisit famous academic disputes by attending to similarity and mirroring between disputants; (2) Analyze failed mentor-student relationships through a mimetic lens; (3) Excavate forgotten rivalries; or (4) Assess Girard's theological readings of rivalries in his final book, *Battling to the End* (2009), among others.

#### - Author Meets Critics: Elizabeth A. Clark's *The Fathers Refounded: Protestant Liberalism, Roman Catholic Modernism, and the Teaching of Ancient Christianity in Early Twentieth-Century America* (2019)

We plan to convene a pre-arranged panel on Elizabeth A. Clark's latest groundbreaking book: *The Fathers Refounded: Protestant Liberalism, Roman Catholic Modernism, and the Teaching of Ancient Christianity in Early Twentieth-Century America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

### Mission Statement:

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

Other

We ask that all accepted papers be submitted to the AAR's Full-Paper Submission program by November 1. We have found that pre-circulated papers improve the quality of our sessions. Our regular attendees expect to read the papers before the meeting. Presenters will give 20-minute summaries of their papers during their session.

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Purvis, Zachary, University of Göttingen, zackpurvis@gmail.com

**Chair** - Briggs, Sheila, University of Southern California, sbriggs@usc.edu

## North American Hinduism Unit

### Call Text:

The North American Hinduism Unit explores the practice of Hindu traditions in the Americas and transnationally. For the 2020 Annual Meeting, we invite proposals on the topics listed below. In addition, we welcome individual paper submissions on any topic related to North American Hinduisms but strongly encourage full panel proposals that note connections between individual papers around a common theme, set of questions, methods of inquiry or theories. If you are interested in any of the topics listed here, please contact the point person listed below. If you have questions about panels more generally, please feel free to contact the Unit Chairs.

- 1) Queer Hinduism/LGBT Hinduism in North America and Beyond (co-sponsored with Hinduism Unit). contact: Tanisha Ramachandran, [ramacht@wfu.edu](mailto:ramacht@wfu.edu)

The North American Hinduism and Hinduism units (co-sponsored session) seek papers that address LGTB+ issues as they are embraced, rejected, condemned, and/or celebrated in Hinduism. Potential topics for papers include: LGTB+ acceptance/rejection in Hindu texts and practice, queer theory and the study of Hinduism, homonationalism and pink washing, LGTB+ rituals, Hinduism and homonormativity, transgressing/upholding gender boundaries and norms.

- 2) Digital Hinduism in North America. Contact: Dheepa

Sundaram, [Dheepa.Sundaram@du.edu](mailto:Dheepa.Sundaram@du.edu) and Tanisha Ramachandran, [ramacht@wfu.edu](mailto:ramacht@wfu.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit seeks papers that address how digital media in North America has affected and influenced practices and depictions of Hinduism in the diaspora. Potential topics include but are not limited to virtual Hindu rituals and practices, identity and group formation in virtual communities, mediated nationalism, and representation of Hinduism in media/social media.

- 3) Responses to Indian Politics in North America. Contact: Shana

Sippy, [shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit sees papers that address diasporic reactions to contemporary Indian politics. Potential topics include but are not limited to recent court rulings and political rhetoric concerning Jammu and Kashmir, Babri Masjid/Ramjanambumi Supreme Court Decision, the Sabrimala verdict, Penal code 377, and the Citizen Amendment Bill.

- 4) Dalit Identities and Caste in North America. Contacts: Sailaja

Krishnamurti, [Sailaja.Krishnamurti@smu.ca](mailto:Sailaja.Krishnamurti@smu.ca) and Shana Sippy, [shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit seeks papers that attend to Dalit identities and the complex relationship between caste and Hinduism in North America.

- 5) Book Panel . Contacts: Khyati Joshi, [khyati@fdi.edu](mailto:khyati@fdi.edu) and [shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu)

The North American Hinduism units invites proposed panels discussing new books related to North American Hinduism.

- 6) Language and Linguistic Innovation in North American Hinduisms.Contacts: Varun

Khanna, [vkhanna1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:vkhanna1@swarthmore.edu) and Shana Sippy, [shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit seeks papers that attend to the ways in which South Asian languages are performed, preserved, transmitted, negotiated, and/or innovated in North American Hindu contexts.

7) Hinduism in American Politics. Contacts: Himanee Gupta-Carlson, [himanee.gupta-carlson@esc.edu](mailto:himanee.gupta-carlson@esc.edu) and Tanisha Ramachandran, [ramacht@wfu.edu](mailto:ramacht@wfu.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit seeks papers that examine the role of Hindus and Hinduism in American politics. Suggested topics include; Tulsi Gabbard and expressions of Hinduism, the nominations of Hindu Americans to judicial roles, enacted rituals and recognition of Hindu festivals and rituals in the political sphere, and the role of organized Hindu groups in political campaigns.

8) Hindu Identity and Nationalism in North America. Contact: Alex Rocklin, [alex.k.rocklin@gmail.com](mailto:alex.k.rocklin@gmail.com) and Shana Sippy, [shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit seeks papers that take a nuanced approach to the relationship between Hindu identity and nationalism in North America. We are not only seeking papers that look at Hindu or Indian Nationalism, but also those that consider the relationship between Hindus and forms of American nationalism (as well as other nationalisms) and forms of white supremacy. We welcome papers that draw on ethnographic research, as well as those that consider alternative forms of media and their role in the circulation of nationalist ideologies. Panelists might consider the various effects of and roles that nationalism plays in shaping contemporary communities.

#### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit was established in 2006 for the purpose of drawing greater scholarly attention to Hinduisms outside of South Asia. Though it will focus on North America, the Unit also welcomes relevant research on Hinduisms in other non-Indian contexts. The Unit has three main goals:

- To study and describe Hinduisms in North America and related diaspora contexts
- To develop a more sophisticated understanding of what distinguishes these Hinduisms from those in South Asia
- To nurture thoughtful debate on the methodologies unique to and appropriate for their study

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

#### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

Other

We encourage people to contact the Chairs advance of submitting proposals if you have any questions or need assistance. We also welcome the possibility of co-sponsored sessions.

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Sippy, Shana, Carleton College, Centre College, shana@sippys.net

**Chair** - Ramachandran, Tanisha, Wake Forest University, ramacht@wfu.edu

## **North American Religions Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This Unit advances the study of religions in North America, broadly conceived (Mexico, the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, etc.), as well as the study of historical, social, and structural links between North American religions and those beyond North American boundaries. We are committed to sponsoring sessions that explore fundamental questions that have shaped the field in the past or should shape it in the future.

The Unit sponsors roundtables, debates, workshops, performances, pre-circulated papers, and other creative formats. As always, this program Unit also welcomes proposals for keyword panels based on important concepts in the field. We encourage the submission of both individual contributions and complete panels, though we may reconfigure proposed panels to place them on the conference program. For panel proposals, diversity of rank (including graduate student, post-doctorate, contingent faculty, and junior and senior participants), and gender, race, and ethnicity is strongly encouraged. We especially seek proposals from junior and contingent scholars. Presenters in any format should expect to give short presentations that maximize time for audience questions and comments. All presenters should explicitly relate research to ongoing discussions in the field and the wider academy. Please ensure that all submissions are anonymous.

In addition to the above, we seek proposals on the following topics for our 2020 meeting in Boston, Massachusetts:

- To reckon with the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims disembarking the Mayflower, and that event's foundational role in a mythos that sustains American settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession, we seek proposals for papers and panels that critically revisit this and related episodes, and explore their consequences for the study of North American religions. For possible quad-sponsorship with the Native Traditions of the Americas Unit, the Women and Religion Unit, and the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit, we invite proposals that interrogate the role of both religious history and myth in producing Indigenous erasure and genocide. We particularly encourage proposals that consider history and myth of the Mayflower, including commemorations like Mayflower 400, in relation to the destruction of the Native Wampanoag Peoples, and the disruption of the Wampanoag matrilineal line. We also invite proposals that further explore the impact of settler colonialism in and beyond the United States, especially those that analyze religion in relation to the genocide of Indigenous peoples from a gender perspective in the North American context, including North America in relation to other contexts affected by European settler colonialism. Proposals that interrogate the widespread killings and disappearance of Indigenous women and girls as a form of genocide are welcome.
- We also invite proposals that seek to queer Pilgrim and Puritan histories, as well as those that consider the retelling, repurposing, and / or dismantling of "Pilgrim" and "Thanksgiving" myths among communities of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers and their advocates, and among Native and anticolonial activists and Black nationalists. We encourage consideration of alternatives to these myths, as told and lived by and within groups marginalized by the colonial

project. We especially encourage consideration of these processes as they happen via the forms and mediums of popular culture.

- Given the conference location in Boston, home of the Big Dig, we also invite proposals that explore themes of religion in relation to gentrification (especially those that critically address race and sexuality alongside class), and changing urban, suburban, or rural patterns of social congregation and / or transit. We also seek proposals that take up religion in relation to excavation and waste.
- In consideration of 2020 as a census year, we invite proposals that explore the place of mapping in the study of North American religion, as well as the role of surveys, statistics or demographics in that study. We encourage submissions that move in this vein to consider questions of pedagogy amid the emergence of the digital humanities.
- We seek proposals for papers and panels that press directionally (south, north, east, west) beyond the geographic scope of North America, to critically consider (and reconsider) alternate frames for the study of religion, including (but not limited to) the hemispheric, the Oceanic, and that of Turtle Island.
- Religion and comparative racializations: For possible co-sponsorship with the Religion in Europe Unit, we seek proposals that not only consider the relationship of religion to race, racialization, and/or racism, but do so comparatively, especially across (though not limited to) North American and European contexts. We invite, too, comparative reflection on religion and the boundaries of politically/socially defined whiteness, on religion and white nationalism, and on religious responses to racial terror amid other forms of “domestic terror.”
- Taking note of the proximity of the conference location to Salem, and for possible co-sponsorship with the Afro-American Religious History Unit, we invite proposals that take up witchcraft, magic, conjure, and/or related terms. In particular, we invite comparative reflection on these categories across time and space, and that consider these categories in relation to gender, ethnicity, class, and especially race.
- We invite proposals for panels that creatively engage pedagogy and/or model innovative approaches to teaching about North American religions. Interactive formats, hands-on workshops, and/or “make it and take it” sessions are especially encouraged.

### **Mission Statement:**

Purpose, Practices and 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 and Procedures" document, make it available to the Steering Committee and the NAR constituency, and revise it as needed by vote of the Steering Committee.

**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:**

**Chair - Holscher, Kathleen, University of New Mexico, kholscher@unm.edu**

**Chair - Weiner, Isaac, Ohio State University, weiner.141@osu.edu**

## **Open and Relational Theologies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

In responding to the 2020 Presidential Theme, "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild," we invite papers on two themes: one on the nature of our Unit as a mini-guild, the other on creative intersections with themes that might be minimally explored in the absence of engagement through the AAR. (1) From Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, and John Sanders to Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and John Cobb, there exists a great diversity of viewpoints studied under the Open and Relational Theologies umbrella. Despite deep differences, in order to become a program Unit of the AAR, Process Theists, Open Theists, and other Relational Theologians had to join forces. We invite papers that explore how the creation of an Open and Relational Theologies Unit has impacted research in open theism, process theology, and other strands of relational theologies. (2) Vulnerability—of God and of creatures—is a distinctive feature of open, process, and relational theologies. We invite papers on "Vulnerability, Disability, and Moral Injury: Open and Relational Perspectives." Potential questions to explore: How can open and relational cosmologies shape our experience of and response to disability or moral injury? How might open, process, and relational models challenge concepts of the "ideal" or the "perfect," including romantic views of nature? How do insights from the fields of disability and/or moral injury challenge, complicate, or advance certain premises of open and relational theologies? To what extent can the natural sciences help shed light on the relevance of vulnerability, disability and/or moral injury in communal processes of cooperation versus competition?

### **Mission Statement:**

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, love, and more—as well as studying the implications of open-relational methods and perspectives on a wide range of social and scientific topics.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Hughes, Krista E., Newberry College, kristaehughes@gmail.com

**Chair** - Schwartz, Wm. Andrew, Center for Process Studies, andrew@ctr4process.org

## Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Unit

### **Call Text:**

For Boston in 2020 we invite proposals that consider the varied roles Pentecostals have played or continue to play in local/global politics. We also seek papers that examine the growth of pentecostalism in New England and the Caribbean, urban pentecostalism(s), the trajectories of grassroots Pentecostalisms, the debates about where Pentecostals fit in the evangelical world and/or generative theological work on particular political, social, ecological, or economic challenges.

For possible co-sponsor with the Schleiermacher Unit: we seek proposals for papers that explore the identity and activity of the Spirit of God. We especially welcome papers that engage both a Pentecostal and/or Charismatic view and the views of Friedrich Schleiermacher. Paper proposals might address, for example, how individuals and groups experience the Spirit in the Church, what the relation is, between the Spirit and Christ, how the Spirit helps Christians to discern personal and social sin, how the Spirit renews or deepens relationships with God, how views about the Spirit and views about faith and hope interrelate, what are the difference between finite spirits and God the Spirit. We also invite proposals that focus on the value of Schleiermacher's pneumatology and Pentecostal or Charismatic pneumatologies for generative theological work on particular political, social, ecological, or economic challenges.

For possible co-sponsor with Mormon Studies Unit: Possible topics for papers might be theological or area studies oriented as well as historical. Scholars might consider the ways in which the spirit and/or the concept of the trinity is considered in both groups, how each group approaches issues of gendered attire and modesty, how modest apparel is marketed to each group, or might concern where either group fits in the category of evangelical, and the impact of each group on post-war politics.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**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

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Payne, Leah, George Fox University, lpayne@georgefox.edu

**Chair** - Johnson, Andrea, California State University, Dominguez Hills, anjohnson@csudh.edu

## **Philosophy of Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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 the following topics:

1. Analytic philosophy and intersectionality
2. Apocalypse and the Anthropocene
3. Judith Butler
4. Niki Kasumi Clements, *Sites of the Ascetic Self: John Cassian and Christian Ethical Formation* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2020)
5. Enrique Dussel and decolonizing philosophy of religion
6. Indeterminacy and translation
7. J. Lorand Matory, *The Fetish Revisited: Marx, Freud, and the Gods Black People Make* (Duke University Press, 2018)
8. Indigeneity and sovereignty

Although proposals for individual papers will be given due consideration, we encourage proposals for prearranged "papers sessions" (i.e., an entire session with a designated group of presenters) on these or other topics 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.

### **Mission Statement:**

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 from the study of religion in a comparative context.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Pearson, Lori K., Carleton College, lpearson@carleton.edu

**Chair** - Lewis, Thomas A., Brown University, tlewis@brown.edu

## **Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit**

### **Call Text:**

First, any topic for one panel related to eros and ascent in ancient medieval and modern thought, especially in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.

Second, any topic for a second panel related to Platonism and Nature. While the radical alteration of the state of the planet through anthropogenic factors have prompted an emergent 'environmental humanities' to provide an intellectual space to re-conceptualise nature, the Platonic tradition has often been ignored or worse yet, demonised, as contributing to a destructive, and anthropocentric understanding of nature. This panel could set out the case for the role of Platonism as an essential historical resource and conceptual model for the reconceptualised concept of nature that the environmental humanities aims to achieve.

### **Mission Statement:**

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. We are supported in this effort by the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies. Several of our panelists have published their papers in the Society's *Journal of Neoplatonic Studies* as well as in other refereed journals in classics, religious studies, theology, and philosophy.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Corrigan, Kevin, Emory University, kcorrig@emory.edu**

**Chair - Hedley, Douglas, University of Cambridge, rdh26@cam.ac.uk**

## **Political Theology Unit**

### **Call Text:**

For 2020, the Political Theology Unit invites proposals for a panel under the title "Pluralizing Political Theology." Although the origin of political theology as a modern area of study is often traced to the work of Carl Schmitt, this obscures other sources that inform the field. Alongside (or instead of) Schmitt, a richer genealogy would include theorists such as Rousseau, Kantorowicz, Soelle, and Cone, and it would consider traditions besides Christianity - Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, etc. We seek submissions that reflect this plurality by explaining the importance of a single figure - an artist, activist, author, etc. - for contemporary debates.

We also welcome paper and panel proposals on any topic relating to political theology. In addition, the Unit is exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election, organized by the Class, Religion and Theology Unit.

We welcome a wide range of methodologies - including philosophy, politics, theology, history, anthropology, etc. - and are particularly interested in submissions that move beyond Christian formulations of political theology.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Newheiser, David, Australian Catholic University, David.Newheiser@acu.edu.au

**Chair** - Radzins, Inese, California State University Stanislaus, iradzins@csustan.edu

## **Practical Theology Unit**

### **Call Text:**

First: In 2019, the International Academy of Practical Theology theme was "(De) coloniality and Religious Practices: Liberating Hope," sparking deeper engagement across the global community about this important area of research and reflection for the field. At the heart of the decolonial movement is, as the IAPT organizers put it, "to elucidate and contest" political and cultural experiences, alternative economies of popular cultures and subaltern populations that have been silenced or destroyed by the conquest that transformed Europe into the center of the world." Further, it engages in "denouncing the "obscure face" of modernity with its devastating consequences in many parts of the world."

In focusing on decoloniality, religious practices, and practical theology, we welcome papers that illumine how coloniality continues to be embedded in communal structures, practices, and cultures; experienced or ignored by individuals and communities; and resisted in fresh ways.

Second: The practical theology group seeks papers that examine notions of vulnerability and/or dignity in relationship to the pressing ecological crisis. This may include ways that vulnerability (human or otherwise) precipitates the continuing degradation of the earth, or vulnerabilities resulting from the effects of climate change and/or earth violence. Likewise, we are interested in the topic of dignity and how it is enhanced, threatened, or diminished in the face of the particularities of the climate crisis.

We seek papers that focus on the correlation between faith and ecological consciousness as well as how religious beliefs contribute to a newly, different, and more dignified behavior towards animals and the earth.

Third: What does it mean to be a pastor in the Christian church in today's changing religious contexts? How do pastors fulfil their role in a situation where not only are individual religious affiliations in flux, but congregational and denominational institutions are likewise being required to adapt amidst shifting and contentious social, political, and religious landscapes, all of which are happening with large-scale global crises – climate change, clergy abuse scandals, nationalism, and mass migration – as the backdrop.

In this session, we welcome papers that present empirical research that explore, study, and reflect theologically and methodologically on how pastors in different settings exercise their role in times of the changes described above. How are the spiritual and prophetic aspects of pastoral practice being re-imagined? How is the everyday ministry of the pastor taking new form?

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Scharen, Christian, Auburn Theological Seminary, [cscharen@auburnseminary.org](mailto:cscharen@auburnseminary.org)

**Chair** - Müller, Sabrina, University of Zurich, [sabrina.mueller@theol.uzh.ch](mailto:sabrina.mueller@theol.uzh.ch)

## **Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit seek papers on the following themes:

Papers on Martin Luther King Jr., including the influence of Boston personalism on this thought, practice, and politics. We also seek papers that underscore the limitations in King's thought regarding gender, sexuality, US exceptionalism, etc.

Papers on functional metaphysics, Boston personalism, and the fraught relationship between pragmatism and metaphysics.

Papers dealing with the State of the field. What is the state of American pragmatism? More specifically what are the current directions in the field regarding race, gender, capital, ecological ethics, etc? What are the possibilities and limitations within the tradition regarding new developments in religious studies, political theology, etc?

### **Mission Statement:**

Our mission 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Winters, Joseph, Duke University, jrw@duke.edu

**Chair** - Rucks, Karen, Quinsigamond Community College, karenl.rucks@charter.net

## **Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

- 1) Punishment or treatment? How substance abuse, addiction and treatment is shaped by religious, political and racialized narratives

The response of care to black and brown bodies addicted to crack (starting in the 1980s) was the proliferation of the prison industrial complex. The response of care to white bodies addicted to opioids (starting in the late 1990s) includes government initiatives on pain management, treatment and recovery, multi-million dollar settlements with drug manufacturers and distributors, and the consideration of additional multi-billion dollar settlements in the future. This session calls for papers that critically examine the social, religious, cultural, and political narratives that govern the disparities of care to various communities and bodies.

- 2) Religious and political systems of dehumanization: Long-term psychological consequences of systemic injustice

What are the long-term psychological consequences of systemic injustice? This session solicits papers that examine connections between long-term consequences of communal trauma that correlate with systemic injustices like mass incarceration, separation of migrant families, the Flint water crisis, police militarization, communal trauma, and other forms of structural oppression. Interested scholars should locate their work with a socio-historic framework that pays special attention to the psychological implications of systemic injustice as a causal factor in communal trauma and which can be analyzed from psychological, cultural and religious perspectives.

- 3) Preparing chaplains for interreligious engagement: Navigating psychological and religious boundaries, texts, values and practices

The world is growing in religious complexity in nearly every sector and the hegemony of Christian practice in the profession of chaplaincy is continuing to erode. No longer can chaplains assume a uniform approach to religion among hospice and hospital patients, military personnel, incarcerated persons, or any groups or persons in their care. Religious multiplicity and spiritual fluidity are increasingly the norm for individuals and even in what may appear to be homogenous communities. Whether chaplains bring personal confessional commitments to a particular world religion, multiple religious belonging, or no particular religious commitments, they must be ready to engage across the religious variety of commitments, boundaries, texts and practices in their work. To be prepared for religious and spiritual care in this new world means chaplains need new skills and competencies as well as fluency with varieties of psychological approaches and religious experiences. This session seeks multiple perspectives on how such skills and practices are learned and embodied.

- 4) Two Decades in the Spotlight: psychological, cultural, and religious impact of public awareness of clergy sexual abuse

Nearly 20 years after the Boston Globe Spotlight exposé of clergy sexual abuse in the Boston diocese, similar scandals have rocked churches and organizations worldwide. This call seeks papers that address the psychological, religious, and cultural impact of wide public awareness of sexual abuse and its coverup.

**Mission Statement:**

The PCR Unit is comprised of scholars and practitioners in the fields of psychology, religious studies, and cultural analysis. The interests of our members range from Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis to the practice of pastoral counseling, from object relations theory to cultural studies of trauma and healing. Our primary purposes are to foster creative research, encourage the exchange of ideas among the membership, and provide a forum within the AAR for people with shared backgrounds in the interdisciplinary study of psychology, religion, and culture.

Here are ways to connect with the PCR Unit

- Please find info on the Annual PCR Call for Papers here:  
<https://papers.aarweb.org/content/psychology-culture-and-religion-Unit>
- Join the PCR listserv by writing to:  
[psychculturereigion@aarlists.org](mailto:psychculturereigion@aarlists.org)
- You can also join the PCR Facebook group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/558617967619873/>

**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:**

**Chair** - Campbell-Reed, Eileen, Central Baptist Theological Seminary,  
[eileen.campbellreed@gmail.com](mailto:eileen.campbellreed@gmail.com)

**Chair** - Cataldo, Lisa M., Fordham University, [lisacataldo7@gmail.com](mailto:lisacataldo7@gmail.com)

## **Quaker Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

- 1) Co-sponsored with Eastern Orthodox Unit: Spiritual Light in the Orthodox and Quaker Spiritual Traditions

The notion of spiritual light occurs in both Orthodox Christianity and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). For George Fox, founder of the Friends, God endows each human being with a measure of his own Divine Spirit. Fox spoke of the Inward Light, coming “from beyond”; the Inner Light is the Divine Light in every person, which guides, teaches, and leads to salvation, and brings those who accept it into unity with God and each other. Many ancient and modern Orthodox spiritual figures report experiences of God or Christ as Light, experiences understood to be Uncreated Divine Light, not created light nor psychological phenomena, and are compared with the light experienced by the Apostles at the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor (Mt. 17:1-8). This co-sponsored session will explore the sense and significance of the notion of spiritual light and the place of spiritual light in the overall theology and spirituality in the Orthodox and Quaker traditions. Emphasis will be given to proposed papers which compare and contrast explanations and descriptions of spiritual light in the two traditions, as well as actual experiences of such light by their adherents, highlighting commonalities and divergences.

- 2) Revolution, Persecution, and Dissent in Boston and Beyond:

This panel seeks paper proposals exploring the history of revolutionary ideas and events in Quaker engagements with culture. Boston is a symbolic place in this history both because of its role in the Revolutionary War, which impacted the status of dissenters in America, and, also, because between 1659 and 1661 four Quakers were executed by Boston officials for preaching their faith. One of these martyrs was Mary Dyer, whose likeness was made into a statue on Boston Commons. Boston, then, is symbolic space in the history and mythologies of Quaker persistence in the face of persecution, innocence of conviction, and martyrdom for a cause. In this respect, the place of Boston is viewed conceptually as a locus for revolutionary, divergent and dissenting ideas and actions. This panel seeks proposals from all disciplines that address Quakers and related movements as they navigate change, dissent, and persecution, whether that be through historical eras or in society today.

- 3) Open Call: The Quaker Studies Unit invites paper proposals on any topic related to Quakerism, to religious groups that bear a family resemblance to Quakerism, or to secular social movements that have been influenced by Quaker ideals.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Quaker Studies Unit seeks to advance critical scholarship of Quakerism and sub-fields that interact with Quaker history, practice and thought. This Unit is particularly focused on interdisciplinary analyses of Quakerism in its global contexts and the breadth of its theological diversity. Quaker Studies includes the variety of religious traditions that derive from the

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), as well as the spiritual and social movements and practices that claim Quaker influence.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Kershner, Jon, Pacific Lutheran University, [jon.kershner@gmail.com](mailto:jon.kershner@gmail.com)

**Chair** - Buck, Jennifer, Azusa Pacific University, [jen.marie.buck@gmail.com](mailto:jen.marie.buck@gmail.com)

## Queer Studies in Religion Unit

### Call Text:

We invite paper and session proposals on the themes of:

Queer studies and secularism (ie, queering secularism, queering as a secular project, decolonizing queer secularisms, etc.)

Queer temporalities and the "end of the world" (ie rethinking the temporality of "endings"; apocalypticism ; escatology; climate change; worlds past; fugitivity, Afropessimism, and Afrofuturity

Proposals for a prearranged session on the book, Melissa Sanchez, *Queer Faith: Reading Promiscuity and Race in the Secular Love Tradition*

With the Gay Men and Religion Program Unit, the Men and Masculinities Program Unit, and the Queer Studies in Religion Unit, we invite papers and session proposals for a potential joint session on the theme of Trans\* and Female Masculinities, with the aim of interrogating and exploring trans\* studies and religious studies. We invite contributions with different approaches (ie, theoretical, empirical, discourse-analytical, historical); that decenter Christianity and/or Global North-based expressions of trans\* and religion; and engage or respond to recent issues in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2019) and *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (2018). Possible paper topics might include: transpessimism; transphobia in religious traditions and politics; disability and crip theory; ritual, materiality, and aesthetics of trans and female masculinities; trans theologies and the divine; "transing religious studies"; futures and provocations for the field.

With the Society for Biblical Literature (SBL) Unit on LGBT Studies: individual papers and/or sessions on the theme of Queer Studies in Religion and the work of Hortense Spillers, scholar of African American studies and American Literature.

With the Program Unit for Religion in Premodern Europe and the Mediterranean: paper and/or session proposals that address the theme of deconstructing premodern gender roles and/or gender binaries.

With the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit and the Queer Studies Unit: LGBTQ+ Experience as an Ecclesial Issue--The reality of LGBTQ+ experience is a complex phenomenon among churches on local, regional, national, and global levels, within Methodist and Wesleyan communities as well as other denominations and church families. That complexity has impacted the pastoral reality of churches and their self-understanding on all these levels. We invite papers that consider how LGBTQ+ people and their experiences impact churches' experiences and ecclesiologies, particularly in Wesleyan and holiness traditions but also in other churches and traditions. How are LGBTQ+ Christians changing the way we think about the church? How are LGBTQ+ experiences challenging local churches, denominational bodies, and ecumenical relationships? When it comes to tensions and even schisms, what are the competing rationales and forms of ethical discernment underlying opposing visions? What are the differing hermeneutical, historical, narrative, scriptural, traditional, social, and cultural dimensions at

work? Are divisions inevitable or are new forms of understanding yet possible? In what ways have LGBTQ+ Christians functioned as a gift, an opportunity, or a challenge to envision or understand the church? What resources in Methodist and Wesleyan theology and ecclesiology, and those of other communities, might assist churches in their responses to LGBTQ+ experiences?

The Unit is also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election. Persons interested in being considered for this panel should contact the Unit's co-chairs.

**Mission Statement:**

The core goals of this Unit are as follows:

- Foster the application of queer theory and gender theory to the study of religion
- Encourage comparative study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in religion
- Support the growth of bisexual studies and transgender studies in the field

We actively seek to explore the connections between queer theory in religion and complementary or overlapping fields of inquiry, such as postcolonial theory, critical race theory, disability theory, feminist theory, and cultural studies, among others.

**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:**

**Chair - White, Heather, University of Puget Sound, Hwhite@pugetsound.edu**

**Chair - Daniels, Brandy, University of Virginia, brandydaniels@gmail.com**

## **Qur'an Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Qur'an Unit welcomes papers on all aspects of the Qur'an, its role in the lives of Muslims, its tradition of commentary, liturgical use, aesthetics and material forms, and its influence in the world generally.

At our last business meeting, we decided not to specify any particular topic associated with the Qur'an and its role in the lives of Muslims past and present except for a special initiative listed below. In general, 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.

Evaluation of proposals to the Qur'an Unit are done by the Steering Committee through anonymous evaluation based on the quality and clarity of the proposal without regard to issues of the presenter's age, status in the profession, gender, religious or ideological affiliation or other factors beyond the quality of the proposal. Regardless of topic, each proposal should reflect an interaction with past and current scholarship and should advance the academic knowledge of aspects of the Qur'an. Also, proposals should describe presentations that reasonably can be made with the time limits imposed by the session lengths given us by the AAR. This means that a paper should be limited to fifteen minutes to allow the maximum number of participants and time for questions and discussion. When considering a proposal, please pay attention to the presentation format so that the presentation will be accessible to individuals with visual and/or auditory impairments. It is the aim of the Qur'an Group to make our presentations accessible and available to the greatest possible number of members of the American Academy of Religion.

For the 2020 annual meeting, we are also inviting papers for a special joint session of the Qur'an Unit and the Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit on Translation, Transmission and Intertextuality. We are hoping to be able to include papers that reflect the problems and methodologies encountered by the members of the Eastern Late Antique Unit and the Qur'an Unit. If you have ideas for a contribution, please correspond with the co-chairs of the two units as soon as possible to help us put together a strong and interesting panel. All proposals for this special initiative as well as for all other papers submitted to the Qur'an Unit will be evaluated through the anonymous evaluation in AAR Papers.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit seeks to provide a forum for comprehensive scholarly discussion of the Qur'an, its commentaries, and its role in Muslim and world societies through a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives. We particularly welcome student-scholars and scholars from all areas of the academy to help us achieve our goals of promoting an understanding of the Qur'an.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Newby, Gordon D., Emory University, gdnewby@emory.edu

**Chair** - Osborne, Lauren, Whitman College, osbornle@whitman.edu

## **Reformed Theology and History Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Reformed Theology and History Unit seeks paper proposals on the following topics:

#### **(1) the Reformed tradition and ecclesial life in Asia**

With the explosive growth of Presbyterianism in parts of Asia, the center of gravity of Reformed thought and ecclesial life is increasingly shifting outside of Europe and North America. For the first in a planned multi-year series of explorations of the global dimensions and dynamics of the Reformed tradition, we invite proposals for papers that examine the Reformed tradition and ecclesial life in Asia. Papers engaging with current or historical issues in theology, World Christianity, missions, reverse missions, Bible translation, theological formation of church leaders, transnational relations with diasporic communities, and tensions with and receptions of Western theologians and models of Reformed faith would all be suitable topics for inquiry. Historical, theological, intercultural, missiological, sociological, ethnographic, postcolonial, and other methodological approaches are welcome.

#### **(2) total depravity**

The belief that under conditions of fallenness, the human being is utterly unable to turn to God, refrain from doing evil, or even accept the gift of salvation is often cited as one of the central teachings of the Reformed tradition. It has been widely criticized as an overly negative view of the human person that downplays freedom and agency and that leaves little room for ethics. Recently, however, more optimistic accounts of the human person are also coming under increasing pressure from a spectrum of perspectives ranging from neuroscience to critical theory. In this context, we invite proposals for papers that investigate what theological, political, and ecumenical work a conception of total depravity may or may not do and how it may or may not have relevance for contemporary analysis. Submissions may be historical or theological in nature. The best contributions will be not only descriptive but also constructive, seeking to relate the Reformed notion of total depravity to contemporary theological, cultural, social, and political issues.

#### **(3) critical or constructive accounts of the meaning of “Reformed and always in need of reform” in theologies past and present**

“Reformed and always in need of reform” (*reformata semper reformanda*) is a recurring refrain in many strands of Protestantism, and particularly in the Reformed tradition, but the meaning of the phrase is far from agreed upon. It can be used to encourage readings of Scripture and tradition that either criticize or support the formulation of liberal theologies for new contexts. Are these two tendencies necessarily in tension or in contradiction? How do we envision the relationship between reform and revolution, continuity and change, tradition and innovation in theology? What is the relationship between the defenders and the despisers of liberal theology in the Reformed tradition? We invite proposals for papers that explore these and related questions.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Nimmo, Paul T., University of Aberdeen, paul.nimmo@abdn.ac.uk

**Chair** - Ralston, Joshua, University of Edinburgh, joshua.ralston@ed.ac.uk

## **Religion and Cities Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religion and Cities Unit seeks papers that analyze the interactive relationship between religion and urban environments at the AAR's Annual Meeting. As a scholarly guild, how does our collective study of religion engage and impact the cities where we meet? In what ways do we contribute to local economies and engage emplaced social justice issues? Alternatively, how does our guild's carbon footprint contribute to local ecological issues and how do we ignore or complicity support structural injustices in the cities where we meet? What data, methods and theories might we draw on or develop to answer these questions. Given the AAR's recent announcement that it will make an archive of past years' programs publically available, how might this help and what other data do we draw on? Might we apply other quantitative and qualitative methods to survey local communities (e.g. local teachers, religious communities, transportation providers, city officials, etc.) about our impact? How do the cities where meet impact the members of the AAR and their work? What theoretical models, including that of mobile cities, could we draw upon to engage the infrastructure, activities, and culture of the AAR Annual Meeting? We thus invite papers or panels that engage the interactive relationship between religion and urban environments at the AAR's annual meeting in any variety of ways.

We are also planning two co-sponsored sessions:

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogies Unit, we seek papers that focus on teaching religion with a focus on local cities and community engagement. We invite proposals that examine the intersections between the study of religion and cities and the ways we teach it. How does the study of religion in particular cities challenge and expand traditional academic epistemologies, methods, and boundaries? In what ways do our pedagogical approaches and strategies engage local communities, urban contexts, and the issues that religious communities encounter or address in cities (e.g. gentrification, violence, homelessness/housing crisis, immigration)? How are theory and practice brought together in the study of religion and cities and in course design?? What are our goals and aims for scholarship and pedagogies that examine religion and cities?

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion, Memory, History Unit, we invite paper or panel proposals on religion in Boston. We are particularly interested in the history and memories contained and/or evoked by the city's geography and built environment especially with regard to issues around justice.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit is focused on scholarship that explores the dynamics of religion in urban contexts. We draw largely, though not exclusively, from social research in looking at the ways in which the cultures, economies, space, and politics both shape and are shaped by the presence of an increasing diversity of faith traditions in cities.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Edwards, Elise, Baylor University, elise\_edwards@baylor.edu

**Chair** - Morales, Harold, Morgan State University, harold.morales@morgan.edu

## **Religion and Disability Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We invite papers in response to the 25th publication anniversary of Nancy Eiesland's pioneering work *The Disabled God* (Abingdon Press, 1994), in which she issued the challenge to encounter and embrace the disabled God, and to recover symbols and rituals from a disability justice perspective. Has her challenge been met, does it need to be clarified or critically reiterated, has it fostered the risky imagination she urged us to seek? What ongoing implications might her work have for perennial topics of religious reflection, such as salvation, atonement, or the nature of faith? We welcome engagement from a range of disciplines, methods, and religious traditions.

For a book panel on theology, ethics, and praxis, we invite engagements with Brian Brock's *Wondrously Wounded: Theology, Disability, and the Body of Christ* (Baylor University Press, 2019), and Grant Macaskill's *Autism and the Church: Bible, Theology, and Community* (Baylor University Press, 2019).

For a possible co-sponsored session of the Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit, the Religion and Disability Studies Unit and the Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Unit:

We invite proposals at the intersection of psychology, religion, trauma, and disability on the threats, experiences, and care for those experiencing trauma effected by violence and/or moral injury, particularly persons with disabilities, veterans, survivors of diverse violences, and other vulnerable populations.

For a possible co-sponsored session of the Religion and Ecology Unit, Religion and Disability Studies Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, and Religion and Migration Unit:

The global climate crisis affects people who are already most susceptible to environmentally linked degradation. We invite papers addressing the devastating impact of climate change and connected ecological crisis on vulnerable peoples, including persons with disabilities, the working class, indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrants, people living unhoused and/or with food insecurities, and others. We welcome engagement from a range of disciplines, methods, and religious traditions.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Scott, David, Iliff School of Theology, dscott@iliff.edu

**Chair** - Peckruhn, Heike, Daemen College, hpeckruh@daemen.edu

## **Religion and Ecology Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religion and Ecology Unit seeks individual paper and complete panel proposals relating to a wide range of themes in religion and ecology including proposals that resonate with the 2020 thematic emphasis on “The AAR as a Scholarly Guild.” The aim of this year’s theme is to be intentionally inward looking and self-reflective. The President of the AAR José Cabezón is asking each Unit to spend the year collectively thinking about the changes that have taken place since our founding over 100 years ago: “where we have been, where we are today, and where we see ourselves going in the years to come.”

This theme lends itself to a historical analysis of the field of religion and ecology writ large by engaging such questions as: What were the initial challenges RandE scholars faced and what challenges do we face today? Whose voices remain stifled or silenced in our field? What should the future of the RandE Unit look like? Additionally, papers that address the legacy and impact of RandE pioneers Sallie McFague, Inés Talamantez, and Dennis Edwards would also be welcome.

Given the conference location in one of the thirteen original British “colonies,” our Unit is also interested in a number of topical themes discussed during our business meeting related to European colonization: the history of climate change as the history of colonization; nationalist imaginations and the re/claiming of land; intersections of religion and petrocultures and/or energy humanities. Other topics and proposals will also be given full consideration.

The Religion and Ecology Unit is also pursuing possible co-sponsored sessions with related units as follows:

- “Settler Colonialism as an Ecological Structure” as a collaboration with the Religion, Social Conflict, and Peace Group. This session is intended to explore the historical and contemporary contours of coloniality (understood as the logic, culture and structure of our Eurocentric modern world-system) and settler colonialism and their impact on land, resources, environments, and religious/cultural practices and traditions.
- “Indigenous Ecologies: Indigenous Nature Relationships, Rights, and Climate Change” as a joint session with the Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit. In contrast with settler colonial modes of consumption and objectification, Indigenous Peoples often hold relationships with the natural world as integrated into kinship, reciprocal, and spiritual networks. In a global context, what are ways that Indigenous Peoples conceive of and maintain these natural relationships? How do Indigenous authors, intellectuals, and languages shape of these relationships? In light of climate change, what are political, legal and spiritual evolutions to these Indigenous ecologies? Successful papers will integrate Indigenous language, philosophies and ecological activism.
- For a joint session of the Religion and Ecology Unit, Religion and Disability Studies Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, and Religion and Migration Unit: The global climate crisis affects people who are already most susceptible to environmentally linked degradation. We invite papers addressing the devastating impact of climate change and connected ecological crisis on

vulnerable peoples, including persons with disabilities, the working poor, indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrants, people living unhoused and/or with food insecurities, and others. We welcome engagement from a range of disciplines, methods, and religious traditions.

- For a possible tri-sponsored session with the Religion and Ecology, Religion and Food, and Class, Religion and Theology units, we invite proposals on the theme of food systems as interfaces between religion, ecology, and class. Food practices are central to nearly every religion — and this food is generated by broader food systems that simultaneously have major environmental impacts, make use of myriad forms of exploited (gendered and raced) labor, and mediate widespread class-based economic and health inequalities. Proposals can address one or several of these (or related) intersections. Historical, ethnographic, sociological, theological, and critical-theoretic methods are all welcome.

Please note that, while individual paper proposals are given full consideration, we especially appreciate complete panel proposals and panels that offer creative alternatives to the usual format of reading out 4-5 papers.

We aim to offer a Friday afternoon workshop on teaching climate change and the Anthropocene. Those interested in participating should contact our co-chair Christopher Carter.

**Mission Statement:**

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, 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Carter, Christopher, University of San Diego, christophercarter@sandiego.edu

**Chair** - Clingerman, Forrest, Ohio Northern University, f-clingerman@onu.edu

## **Religion and Economy Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This Unit welcomes individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable proposals related to the group's mission, including but not limited to the themes described below. We encourage the submission of pre-arranged sessions, including and especially sessions with innovative formats and modes of presentation. Please note that our Unit typically holds sessions that last 90-minutes.

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 encouraged.

The following session themes reflect suggestions from the business meeting at the annual meeting as well as ideas from steering committee members. These suggestions, however, are intended to inspire rather than limit potential submissions.

- Corruption. How does religion impact what is seen as corruption, or not? Related topics might include: corruption outside of North America; the notion of laundering money through religious activity/organizations/concepts; policies that enable or cultivate what might otherwise be seen as corruption (potentially with the Law, Religion, and Culture Unit).
- Informal economies and cryptocurrencies. This might include analyses of technology and finance (e.g., digital currencies). How do religious practices and ideas converge with (support, enable, or somehow resist) forms of economic exchange that escape traditional state control and market mediation? How do local examples of informal economies broaden and expand our understanding of religion and economy?
- Consumption and identity. How are religious identities cultivated through consumption? Papers on this topic might focus—for example—on media consumption (including political media, perhaps in response to the 2020 election) or theoretical critiques of consumption. In collaboration with the Religion and Popular Culture Unit, papers on this topic might also focus on conspicuous consumption, popular depictions of excessive wealth, or theological accounts of capital accumulation (especially outside of the United States).
- Strikes and boycotts. Papers and sessions on this topic might include strikes and boycotts in response to a variety of concerns, including climate extinction. How do political rituals conjure up questions of religion and the religious?
- Entrepreneurship and social authority around the world. Papers on this theme might also examine the study of business and management in business schools. Related topics might include workplace spirituality, servant leadership, conscious capitalism, and capitalist humanitarianism.
- Legal concepts of personhood, including corporate personhood (potentially with the Law, Religion, and Culture Unit)

- Automation and justice. Papers on this theme might examine, for example, the concept of work, Universal Basic Income, and transhumanism.
- Religion between Marx and Foucault. Although Foucault's interest in the materiality of the body may seem more central to the study of religion than Marx's perceived economism, the turn to power in social theory may have marginalized important issues of domination and political economy long associated with Marx's legacy. With this in mind, we invite papers that somehow situate religious studies between Marx and Foucault.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit sponsors multidisciplinary conversations that explore intersections between religious and economic modes of social life. Building upon and extending scholarship that considers how economic systems and constraints orient religious activity, this Unit 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Oliphant, Elayne, New York University, elayne.oliphant@nyu.edu

**Chair** - Vaca, Daniel, Brown University, daniel\_vaca@brown.edu

## **Religion and Food Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This Group provides an opportunity for scholars to engage in the intersection of religion and food, foodways, and food ethics. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras. We seek papers investigating practices and beliefs related to food, drink, fasting, the production of food, the ethics of production and consumption, or on any aspect of religiously influenced foodways.

Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Inspired by our Boston location, we welcome submissions that treat the question of food in the colonial period, particularly among the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, the Cavaliers of the Chesapeake, the Quakers of the Mid-Atlantic, as well indigenous/native contemporaneous communities. We are particularly interested in the use of regional ingredients and religious practice/associations.
- 2) Similarly, we welcome papers related to the carrying of food cultures during (im)migration
- 3) Also related to region and calendar location, we welcome submissions that engage the themes related to Thanksgiving: a) as a ceremonial meal, b) as a locus for nostalgia and romanticization, c) as a place to proclaim (or deny) hospitality, and d) as a means of asserting or appropriating identity.
- 4) For a possible tri-sponsored session with the Religion and Ecology, Religion and Food, and Class, Religion and Theology units, we invite proposals on the theme of food systems as interfaces between religion, ecology, and class. Food practices are central to nearly every religion — and this food is generated by broader food systems that simultaneously have major environmental impacts, make use of myriad forms of exploited (gendered and raced) labor, and mediate widespread class-based economic and health inequalities. Proposals can address one or several of these (or related) intersections. Historical, ethnographic, sociological, theological, and critical-theoretic methods are all welcome.
- 5) For a possible co-sponsored session between the Mysticism Unit and Religion and Food Unit, we welcome papers focusing on mystical consumption, including not only the idea of food, drink, or other forms of consumption as mystical practices, but also the idea of the mystic as food, or what is consumed.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides an opportunity for scholars to engage in the intersection of religion and food, foodways, and food ethics. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras. We encourage critical reflection regarding:

- The relationships of religious commitments to food (production, preparation, consumption, and invention)
- Diet and sustainability
- Issues of food (in)justice, which may include food availability or insecurity, commitment to

wellness, access to healthy foods, food deserts, etc.

- Desertification, flood, fire, and climate related food ethics issues
- Theological, spiritual, and religious interrelationships as expressed in food commitments or confluence
- 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Zeller, Benjamin, Lake Forest College, zeller@lakeforest.edu

**Chair** - Hicks, Derek, Wake Forest University, hicksds@wfu.edu

## **Religion and Human Rights Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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, etc.

Though proposals on any topic related to religion and human rights are welcome, we are particularly in proposals on the following topics:

- Human rights and human dignity, especially how these concepts are understood and grounded within different religious traditions and at different moments in history.
- Human rights and migration (for a proposed co-sponsored session with Religion and Migration): how religion and human rights function together to address the contemporary immigration crisis, including current debates over whether there is a right to resist or disobey particular immigration laws in the name of religious freedom.
- The deployment of religious ideas and practices in resistance to human rights, including interfaith and multifaith initiatives. One prominent example of this phenomenon is the U.S. State Department’s recent creation of the “Commission on Unalienable Rights,” which is designed to re-examine the foundations of universal human rights in light of particular natural law values proclaimed to rest at the heart of the “American” conception of such rights.
- The making of “spiritual spaces” in the context of human rights activism. Papers may address aspects of spiritual and/or religious activism related to human rights, and especially how religion and/or spirituality is “generated” and understood within activist movements. Examples include the presence of Native American religious ritual and concepts of sacred space during protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock, even as appeals were likewise made to land and sovereignty rights, and the complicated relationship of the Black Lives Matter movement to religious organizations and its use of spiritual and religious language, alongside calls for civil and constitutional rights.

### **Mission Statement:**

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; 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.

**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:**

**Chair:** Alexander, Laura, University of Nebraska, lealex@unomaha.edu

**Chair:** Reinbold, Janna, Colgate University, jreinbold@colgate.edu

## **Religion and Migration Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religion and Migration Unit seeks individual paper proposals and session proposals (presider, 3 presenters, respondent) for the 2020 Annual Meeting to be held in Boston, MA related to the following themes:

- Diaspora and Transnational Religious Practices
- Immigration, Intersectionalities, and Identity
- Im/migration and Identity Formation of Second- and Third-Generations (including identity construction, maintenance or conversion in the diaspora)
- Modern Migration and the Interpretation/ Incorporation of Religious Texts
- Religion, Migration, and Demographics
- Migration and Inter-Religious Cooperation
- The Creation of Borders as Weapons (i.e. excluding certain religious groups)
- Human rights and migration (for a proposed co-sponsored session with Religion and Human Rights): how religion and human rights function together to address the contemporary immigration crisis, including current debates over whether there is a right to resist or disobey particular immigration laws in the name of religious freedom.

We also invite submissions for a possible co-sponsored session of the Religion and Ecology Unit, Religion and Disability Studies Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, and Religion and Migration Unit: The global climate crisis affects people who are already most susceptible to environmentally linked degradation. We invite papers addressing the devastating impact of climate change and connected ecological crisis on vulnerable peoples, including persons with disabilities, the working class, indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrants, people living unhoused and/or with food insecurities, and others. We welcome engagement from a range of disciplines, methods, and religious traditions.

Finally, we offer an open call for any other topics dealing with religion and migration, especially proposals that address theoretical and methodological issues in the field of migration in relation to religious studies.

### **Mission Statement:**

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 or contact Rubina Ramji, [ruby\\_ramji@cbu.ca](mailto:ruby_ramji@cbu.ca)

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Ramji, Rubina, Cape Breton University, [rubina@eastlink.ca](mailto:rubina@eastlink.ca)

**Chair** - Spina, Nanette, University of Georgia, [spinan@uga.edu](mailto:spinan@uga.edu)

## **Religion and Politics Unit**

### **Call Text:**

#### **1. Joint session: Religion and Politics and History of Christianity**

We seek to foster an interdisciplinary discussion on the relationship between religion and historical elections. This session seeks papers that address how religion has influenced historical elections at various levels of government. We are open to all periods of American history and encourage proposals historically rooted before the 21st century. We ask: what historical examples can we turn to better understand the relationship between religion and elections, and how can this help us understand the present moment?

#### **2. Joint session: Religion and Politics and Space, Place, and Religion Unit**

We seek papers that analyze examples of religious places and spaces that are made or developed by the political state. Possible themes could address mechanics of religious places' development and the means by which a state sanctifies the nation as sacred space; the kinds of religious space(s) that states create; and applications of spatial theory and methodologies to help think through the entanglements state actions create with historically sacred landscapes and places. We especially seek papers that address specific examples of how states create and authorize religious places and spaces.

#### **3. Joint session: Religion and Politics and Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence**

Religious communities are both targets and consumers of surveillance. State monitoring of faith groups has a lengthy history, with particular strategies deployed in different periods and unique contexts. Yet academic analysis of religious practice as a site of and for security surveillance remains in its infancy. This panel seeks to encourage discussion about the ways in which religious identity is invoked by socio-political authorities as a justification for its surveilled gaze of "others;" how some members of religious groups deploy surveillance tactics, like social media "trolling," to advance their own agendas and possibly silence vulnerable members of society; and the complicity of technology companies in engaging in overt and covert surveillance, oftentimes supported by the state apparatus. Ideally, these and other topics will be explored across a range of geographical contexts and faith traditions.

#### **4. We also ask for papers on the intersection of religion and politics from a national and an international perspective on any topic but this year we are particularly interested in:**

##### **a. The Election of 2020**

Including: polling integrity, voting access, security at polling places, and demographic electoral shifts

##### **b. Artificial Intelligence**

Including: bias in programming, moral and philosophical questions, issues related to legal culpability, transhumanism, and religious pronouncements on the ethical implications of AI.

##### **c. Religion, Protest, and Revolution**

We particularly invite papers with an international focus on the role of religious actors, beliefs, movements, and institutions in recent uprisings and protests.

**d. The Religious Left and the Religious Right**

Seeking papers that address new directions in these movements or that discuss limitations and complications of traditional left/right binaries (e.g., Obama-Trump voters, conservative "Never Trumpers," non-white evangelicals, as well as "ex-vangelicals").

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides a forum for scholars and professionals interested in the relationships between religion, the state, and political life, both in the United States and around the world. Our members focus on the interaction between religious and political values, movements, and commitments, and the role of religious individuals and communities in bodies politic. This focus includes attention to the ways in which religion and religious actors participate in public discourse, contribute to debates over public values and social policy, and affect — and are affected by — activity in the political sphere. We welcome members doing both normative and descriptive work from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, including religious studies, political science, philosophy, social ethics, law (including church-state studies), history (as it relates to contemporary understandings), and theology. We seek to advance scholarly inquiry on religion and politics and we seek also to speak to broad and diverse publics about areas falling under the Unit's purview.

We also maintain a year-round Religion and Politics Google group, which is open to all AAR members here: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/aar-religionandpolitics>

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Scott, Rachel M., Virginia Tech, [rmh@vt.edu](mailto:rmh@vt.edu)

**Chair** - Carlson, John D., Arizona State University, [john.carlson@asu.edu](mailto:john.carlson@asu.edu)

## **Religion and Popular Culture Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We seek papers on musical theater, movie musicals (including Bollywood), and/or Industrial musicals

While global income inequality soars, popular culture is crowded with billionaires and bling, conspicuous consumption and prosperity preaching. When are fortunes sanctioned as divine favor, and which are decried as decadence? What are the religious affects, ethics and habits of thought that underly audacious displays of excessive wealth? We invite papers that examine through the lens of religious studies, popular depictions of excessive wealth and/or or theological accounts of capital accumulation. We are especially interested in subject matter based outside of the United States. (co-sponsored by Religion and Economy Unit)

On the 100th Anniversary of the enactment of Prohibition, we seek papers examining the role of alcohol in religion and popular culture. Papers might consider Temperance movements, religious popular culture during American Prohibition, as well as the prohibition of alcohol in other nations, use of religious imagery in the marketing of alcoholic beverages, beer ministries, the manufacture of alcohol by religious groups, alcohol at popular religious festivals, Mardi Gras, etc.

On the 50th anniversary of the 1970 Kent State massacre, and mindful of continuing worldwide protest movements from Hong Kong to Lebanon to Chile, we invite papers that show how popular culture sacralizes protest movements, and how protest movements sacralize pop culture symbolism.

In African societies there is considerable overlap and fluidity between religion and popular culture. Religious language, imagery, symbols and texts often shape, and are shaped by, the products and influences of contemporary mass culture in its various forms. We invite papers that will explore this productive relationship between religion and popular culture in African contexts. (co-sponsored with the African Religions Unit)

In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the release of the documentary *Paris Is Burning*, and the anticipated 3rd season of the FX TV series *Pose*, the Gay Men and Religion Unit and the Religion and Popular Culture Unit are calling for individual papers or a pre-arranged session on LGBTQ ballroom culture.

How is the current interest in Heathenry being impacted by trends in popular culture and media? In particular we seek papers exploring the influence of television shows such as "The Vikings", the rise of interest in genealogy and ancestry.com, internet message boards and meme culture, and Marvel. (Co-sponsored with the Contemporary Paganism Unit).

Korean Popular Culture and Religion, including:

1. Korean Pop Music (K-pop) and religion, including the religiosity of global K-pop culture, transnational receptions of K-pop in diverse religious settings, intersections of gender, race, religion, and K-pop, etc.
2. Korean cinema and religion, including cinematic representations of Korean religious culture,

perspectives on world religions in Korean cinema, role of religion in Korean film production and consumption, etc.

3. Any other papers that address the relationship between Korean Popular Culture and Religion as broadly construed.

(Co-sponsored with the Korean Religions Unit)

The AAR's Religion and Popular Culture Unit and the SBL's Bible and Popular Culture Unit invite proposals for a joint session exploring the influence, artistry, and cultural impact of Kanye West. We invite analyses of West (through, for instance, his lyrics/music/albums, videos, religious services, and branding) and his international cultural impact through a range of methodologies, including textual criticism; biblical reception studies; ethnography; ritual and media studies; and other approaches that critically examine West's use of Bible and biblical/religious imagery and the impact of his oeuvre on contemporary religion and popular culture.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Siegler, Elijah, College of Charleston, sieglere@cofc.edu

**Chair** - Gregory, Rabia, University of Missouri, gregoryra@missouri.edu

## **Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Public education remains a locus for common preparation for living in democratic societies. Religion has become a globally relevant societal issue also in the educational settings. This is not only due to students and family's personal beliefs, or the presence of religious institutions. Over the past 5-10 years religion has also become a hot topic in discussions within social media. This situation presents teachers with challenges where competence about religion becomes increasingly important. Public education has a special role here, as schools, universities, and other educational settings gather together the children or students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

This is a call for papers on the multifaceted challenge of public-school teachers in how to deal with the increased presence of social media in the classroom. Papers could deal with

- general issues, policies, law or other influencing or constraining parameters relative to religion in social media
- models and best practices in how to deal with what students learn or do not learn about religion in social media.
- analysis of social media resources for teaching religion in public schools and for teaching teachers.

We also invite papers in an open call that advances the mission of this program group, particularly in connection with the 2020 theme of the American Academy of Religion: "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild".

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit will promote the comparative study of religious education in public schools around the world. By encouraging interdisciplinary research on the ethical, legal, political, pedagogical, and religious 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Berglund, Jenny, Stockholm University, jenny.berglund@hsd.su.se

**Chair** - Owens, Erik, Boston College, erik.owens@bc.edu

## **Religion and Science Fiction Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Religion and Science Fiction invites proposals exploring the intersections of religion and speculative fictions in ways that illuminate theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues in the study of religion. We are especially interested in proposals that invite audience conversation, make use of new media, and consider alternative "sciences" and worlds. We seek proposals on the following topics and invite proposals from a commensurate range of disciplinary and methodological approaches.

Of particular interest will be papers that sit at the intersection between science fiction, religion-and-science, technology, and public policy. Possibilities include superheroes, socially participatory AIs, technological interventions to end scarcity, intergalactic travel, human enhancement, and bioengineering. Other possible topics or panel proposals would be considered addressing issues such as: Religion and A.I. and Monsters; The work of NK Jemisin; Boston/New England in SF: HP Lovecraft's Mythos to Stephen King's *Cell* and beyond.

Cognitively Estranged Texts and Cognitive Science -- The findings of cognitive science have been productively applied to the study of religion in a variety of ways. How might cognitive science generally and more specifically cognitive narratology be applied to the study of religion and science fiction? Are there certain distinctive cognitive qualities that science fiction texts embody and induce, and how might the findings of cognitive science help one analyze sf? For example, how authors construct sf narratives, what effects such narratives have on individuals and groups, what cognitive constraints shape the making of story worlds, whether sf enables or encourages certain cognitive states, habits, etc., how some sf narratives make use cognitive science research, what all this might contribute more broadly to sf theory and to religious studies?

Proposals for a possible co-sponsored session with New Religious Movements: NRM and Religion and Science fiction seek papers that consider new religious movements in tandem with the theories or tropes of science fiction, and are receptive to a wide range of critical approaches.

Proposals for a co-sponsored session with Secularism and Secularity: Science Fiction and Secular Apocalypses: We invite papers for a potential co-sponsored panel with the Religion and Science Fiction program Unit: We are interested in work that addresses any aspect of the dystopic that may overlap with the secular imaginary regarding phenomena such as climate change, authoritarianisms, genocide, etc.

Globalizing Science Fiction: Textual and Cultural Translations. The range of sci-fi storytelling has broadened considerably in the new millennium with an explosion of science fiction and speculative fiction grounded in different narrative structures and cultural imaginaries, dissolving the US's hold on the field and, in many cases, transforming it through the production of anglophone texts. We seek papers that engage with text(s) in this vein: anglophone sf texts by non-US or European-based creators, English translations of science fiction works originally

produced in other languages, and anglophone works imaginatively grounded in non-European cultures.

**First contact and revolution/resistance:** Much of speculative fiction is concerned with issues of contact and reworking the colonial past, revolutions and/or first contact. We seek papers that engage both alternative histories and futures, including both theories of science fiction and the science fictionalization of history, colonialism and/or revolutions. Other possible connected topics include aboriginal, native american traditions; relatedly, decolonizing narratives and theories present in Science fiction.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit connects the study of religion to the limitless possibilities for world-making, soul-saving, god-imagining, community-forming, and human-being posed by science fiction (and broadly, “speculative” fictions). Science Fiction (SF) is a literary and visual medium addressing the most basic existential and teleological questions human beings can pose. As the genre of infinite possible worlds and human and superhuman becoming, SF has a unique ability to ask, examine, and suggest answers to the most profound questions and to envision transcendence beyond traditional realist literature or religious interpretations of the world.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Ammon, Laura, Appalachian State University, [lauraammon@gmail.com](mailto:lauraammon@gmail.com)

**Chair** - Burton, Emanuelle, University of Illinois, Chicago, [emanuelle.burton@gmail.com](mailto:emanuelle.burton@gmail.com)

## **Religion and Sexuality Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We are particularly interested in papers addressing and analyzing the following themes:

- Migration with an emphasis on bodies in borderland spaces; planetary futures; Islam and migration; climate change; ritual slaughter; ecowomanisms/feminisms; ecoactivism; far right ideas about bodies and futures; other intersections of ecology, religion, and sexuality.
- Heterosexualities with an emphasis on reproduction; planetary futures; masculinities; marriage; performance; narratives; control; mastery.

### **Mission Statement:**

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 are also particularly interested in comparative international perspectives. We especially encourage interdisciplinary approaches, interest in gender (broadly defined), and strong attention to methodological issues.

While we welcome papers that address theory we are especially interested in praxis-based theoretical analysis.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Leath, Jennifer S., Iliff School of Theology,** jennifer.s.leath@gmail.com

**Chair - Hoel, Nina, University of Oslo,** ninahoel@gmail.com

## **Religion and the Social Sciences Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religion and Social Sciences Unit (RSS) invites proposals for papers and research projects that address the introspective turn to the theme of the 2020 conference: To the guilds of Religious Studies and Theology and to how we research, write, and think about religion. We welcome proposals that address the following: 1.) How religion is conceptualized and measured within social scientific studies; 2.) The utility of surveys and what they do for our scholarly understanding of religion, as well as the larger public's understanding of religion; 3.) The current and future status of social scientific approaches to the study of religion within Religious Studies; and 4.) How social scientific methods can help elucidate trends in immigration and transnationalism. We welcome proposals that are related to Boston and the surrounding geographies. We encourage proposals to be creative and to not be bound by the traditional read-aloud paper, rather to offer mixed methodology presentation styles such as Prezi, visual imagery, and sound.

Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Co-sponsored with Bioethics and Religion Unit and Religion and the Social Sciences

"Religion, Race, and the Embodied Health and Well-Being of Black Women: Bioethics and Womanist Perspectives

From their arrival in the New World, the bodies of African diasporan women have been an embattled space of abuse, disrespect, and egregious experimentation often perpetrated by socio-economics, from colonial enslavement through contemporary mass incarceration; giving birth in the fields and working moments later, with infants ripped from their hands and simultaneously forced to be wet nurses for white babies. Such behavior, steeped in exploitative economics that totally disregarded black women's personhood had a significant impact on moral, ethical, legal, medical, religious, sociopolitical, scientific, and sociological systems in the United States. The impact on African American women's embodied lives is vast, from issues of physical and mental health; reproductive justice (forced hysterectomies, sterilization, maternal and infant mortality) to stigmatized health care, biased health and health care policies, technology, body enhancement; environmental injustice, to inequitable health, regardless of class including lesser access to health care and health insurance. Much conversation is emerging around the intersectionalities of Black women's lived experiences, and our scholarship, including topics of interests and methodologies. This session invites papers addressing any of these topics and areas related to all aspects of Black women's embodied health. Social scientific theories and methods in religious studies and applied ethics are welcome.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit supports scholarship at the intersection of the social sciences — including psychology, ethnography, sociology, political sciences, economics, and cultural studies — and religious or

theological studies. Topic areas include the study of religious and theological questions through specific social scientific methodologies, the contribution of religious and theological approaches to the work of social scientific disciplines, and comparative assessments of current issues by humanities-based and social scientific methods.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection. Please do not include any identifying information in the body of your proposal.

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Williams, Sara, Emory University, [sara.williams@emory.edu](mailto:sara.williams@emory.edu)

**Chair** - Phillips, Nichole, Emory University, [nichole.r.phillips@emory.edu](mailto:nichole.r.phillips@emory.edu)

## **Religion in Europe Unit**

### **Call Text:**

- For a possible co-sponsorship with the North American Religions Unit, we seek proposals that consider the connection between religion and race, racialization, and/or racism, especially comparing these concepts between Europe and North America. Topics could include, but are not limited to: the religious roots of racial bloodlines, the historical development of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism or the Othering of ethno-religious minorities, or shifting boundaries of politically/socially defined whiteness.
- Religious and/or spiritual responses to environmental challenges/concerns in Europe including, but not limited to: religio-political responses to the climate emergency declared by the European Parliament; changing patterns of responses/analyses from within the religious studies academy; the intersection of indigenous religious communities' responses with regards to the environment and land protection/rights.
- The role of the interpretation of scripture and the construction of historical narratives of religion in Europe related to, but not limited to, the following: questions of shifting gender dynamics; feminist or LGBTQ+ reinterpretations of scriptures and/or historical narratives; the (mis)use or abuse of political power; (re)articulations of collective identities; the reconceptualization of the idea of empire, nation, and/or Europe as a supranational entity.
- For a panel on 'integrating the secular into the religious' in response to the 2020 Presidential Theme of "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild," we seek papers that may: reflect on comparative debates on the relationship between 'the religious' and 'the secular' between Europe and North America; analyse attempts to integrate secular discourses within the religious fields in Europe - e.g. with regards to human rights, healing, or nature discourses; theorize the evolution of the dialectic relationship between 'the secular' and 'the religious' over time within the AAR academy; or offer a methodological reflection of the tension between 'secular' and 'confessional' approaches to the study of religion.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit is designed to serve as a forum for the examination of religious issues related to the social, cultural, and political development of both Eastern and Western Europe. Its 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 the European experience.

**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:**

**Chair** - Ferrara, Carol, Boston University, ferrara@bu.edu

**Chair** - Cutter, Elissa, Georgian Court University, ecutter@georgian.edu

## **Religion in Premodern Europe and the Mediterranean Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We welcome proposals on all topics related to the Unit's subject matter, broadly conceived. Proposals that are themselves comparative in nature or that present novel approaches to the study of premodern religion are particularly welcome. We encourage the submission of preformed panel proposals suitable for 90-minute time slots. We also encourage the submission of individual paper proposals for panels on the following subjects:

Deconstructing Premodern Gender Roles and Binaries (potential co-sponsorship with Queer Studies in Religion)

Race in the Middle Ages (potential co-sponsorship with History of Christianity) -- We have witnessed in the past few years that symbols, texts, and ideas of the Middle Ages have been deployed by white nationalist groups to promote racist notions of superiority and purity. Recent books including Geraldine Heng's *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* and M. Lindsey Kaplan's *Figuring Racism in Medieval Christianity* are clear calls to critically examine the logics, political histories, and mobilizations of this era. We seek to organize an interdisciplinary panel to further this discussion.

The Place of the Premodern in Religious Studies -- Most religious studies departments can find a place for biblical scholars at one end and for a Reformation scholar at the other. The medievalist, however, seems a quaint figure easily dispensed with when funding is short, and is consequently underrepresented within the AAR as well. We seek to organize a roundtable discussion of the ways that this "middle" is understood and represented in departments and the AAR, focusing both on challenges specific to medievalists and on opportunities to engage with colleagues who work on other time periods.

The Place of Comparison/Comparativists in the AAR (potential co-sponsorship with Comparative Studies in Religion) -- If you are interested in joining this proposed roundtable, please contact Oliver Freiberger ([of@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:of@austin.utexas.edu)) and David Freidenreich ([dfreiden@colby.edu](mailto:dfreiden@colby.edu)).

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Catlos, Brian, University of Colorado, brian.catlos@gmail.com

**Chair** - Freidenreich, David, Colby College, dfreiden@colby.edu

## **Religion in South Asia Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Steering Committee of the Religion in South Asia (RISA) Unit invites colleagues to submit proposals for the 2020 AAR Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. RISA's mission is to provide a venue for new research on the many religious cultures, literatures, and histories of South Asia. 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 collaboration. Panels and papers are also encouraged that respond to the 2020 AAR Presidential Theme: "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild."

The RISA steering committee accepts full panel submissions only (i.e. Papers Sessions), with the exception of papers for the New Directions panel (see below). For the 2020 Annual Meeting, RISA has a flexible allotment of panel formats: either one 2.5-hour session, one 2-hour session, and five 90-minute sessions; OR two 2.5-hour sessions, one 2-hour session, and three 90-minute sessions. RISA can also sponsor one additional paper session if it is co-sponsored with another Unit. Please note most RISA panels will be 90-minute and plan your proposals accordingly.

In your proposal, you may specify your preferred panel format (150, 120, or 90 minutes) but the time allotted for accepted panels varies based on the overall programming needs. In the past, 150-minute panels have usually consisted of 6 participants (4 paper presenters, a discussant or respondent, and a presider), and 90-minute panels have consisted of 4 or 5 participants (3 paper presenters, a presider, and perhaps a respondent). However, creative formats are encouraged, such as roundtables, paired papers with no respondent, pre-circulated papers, and so on. If relevant, list any potential co-sponsoring Unit with your proposal. All Papers Session Panel Proposals must be submitted through the PAPERS system on the AAR website.

### New Directions Panel 2020:

The RISA Steering Committee accepts individual paper submissions in one category in order to provide space for new scholarship in our field. To be eligible, applicants must (1) be ABD doctoral students (or recent graduates) focusing on religion in South Asia from any disciplinary perspective, 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 the Co-Convenors for the New Directions panel, Bhakti Mamtora ([bmamtora@wooster.edu](mailto:bmamtora@wooster.edu)) and Anand Venkatkrishnan ([anandv8@uchicago.edu](mailto:anandv8@uchicago.edu)), AND upload your individual paper proposal in the AAR's PAPERS system, labelled as a "New Directions" submission.

If you are looking for collaborators towards proposing a panel session, please feel free to reach out to colleagues on the RISA listserv, to contact the RISA co-chairs for assistance (Sarah Pierce Taylor [[sarah.piercetaylor@concordia.ca](mailto:sarah.piercetaylor@concordia.ca)] and Jenn Ortegren [[jortegren@middlebury.edu](mailto:jortegren@middlebury.edu)]), or to email the colleagues listed below if there is a topic that is interesting to you.

### Prospective panel themes for 2020:

Ayodhya in perspective: history, politics, law  
Jack Hawley, [jsh3@columbia.edu](mailto:jsh3@columbia.edu)

Digital Cultures and Secularisms in South Asia  
Prathiksha Srinivasa, [prathiksha.srinivasa@gmail.com](mailto:prathiksha.srinivasa@gmail.com)

Genres of Performance: The Many Lives of Sacred Texts  
Bhakti Mamtora, [bmamtora@wooster.edu](mailto:bmamtora@wooster.edu)

A History of Indian religions in 7 or 8 objects  
Karen Ruffle, [karen.ruffle@utoronto.ca](mailto:karen.ruffle@utoronto.ca)

The History of the Religion in South Asia Unit of the AAR  
Anand Venkatkrishnan, [anandv8@uchicago.edu](mailto:anandv8@uchicago.edu)

Karma: Explorations in and Across Boundaries of Knowledge in South Asia  
Angela Rudert, [arudert@colgate.edu](mailto:arudert@colgate.edu)

Pedagogy and sensitive issues  
Karen Ruffle, [karen.ruffle@utoronto.ca](mailto:karen.ruffle@utoronto.ca)

Religion and Left Politics in South Asia  
Anand Venkatkrishnan, [anandv8@uchicago.edu](mailto:anandv8@uchicago.edu)

Religion, Literature, and the City in South Asia  
István Keul, [istvan.keul@uib.no](mailto:istvan.keul@uib.no)

Rethinking Agency and Autonomy through South Asian Religious Traditions  
Kalpesh Bhatt, [kalpesh.bhatt@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:kalpesh.bhatt@mail.utoronto.ca)

Sacred places--climate crises  
Jack Hawley, [jsh3@columbia.edu](mailto:jsh3@columbia.edu)

Theorising Meaning and Authority through Inter-religious and Intra-religious Texts  
Karen O'Brien-Kop and Avni Chag, [Karen\\_O'Brien-Kop@soas.ac.uk](mailto:Karen_O'Brien-Kop@soas.ac.uk) and [avni\\_chag@soas.ac.uk](mailto:avni_chag@soas.ac.uk)

The Vedic-Buddhist Interface  
Caley Smith, [smith.caley@gmail.com](mailto:smith.caley@gmail.com)

### **Mission Statement:**

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 a geographical area, the religious, cultural, and intellectual traditions of that area, and changes that have occurred in those traditions over several millennia. Scholars of South Asia explore the distinctive manifestations of religious traditions in 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 [www.montclair.edu/RISA](http://www.montclair.edu/RISA). 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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Pierce Taylor, Sarah, University of Chicago, [sptaylor@uchicago.edu](mailto:sptaylor@uchicago.edu)

**Chair** - Ortegren, Jennifer, Middlebury College, [jennortegren@gmail.com](mailto:jennortegren@gmail.com)

## **Religion in Southeast Asia Unit**

### **Call Text:**

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 with pre-circulated papers. (This can be indicated in your panel proposal.) Continuing our effort to cultivate a greater inclusiveness in the range of topics and participants involved in the Unit's activities, we will favor submissions from both underrepresented groups and those who have never before presented in this Program Unit.

Topics of special interest for 2020 include:

- Economy and Religion
- Religion in the City
- New Religious Movements
- Climate Change and Religion
- Popular Religion
- Mysticism
- Ramayana Across Regions

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Kaloyanides, Alexandra, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, akaloyan@uncc.edu

**Chair** - Anwar, Etin, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, anwar@hws.edu

## **Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

#### **Future Loss, Future Hope**

Futures loom or beckon, and pulse with affective charge in the now. How do the oncoming collapses of planetary ecosystems, climate stability, and the privilege of comfort and safety reverberate affectively in religious lives, ideas and communities? What are the affects that attend and bear the future and its approach(es)? What are the affects of the future or the affects of a future as always already present?

Dystopia/ utopia/ apocalypse/Afro-pessimism/capitalism/ecology/death/ and the affects of religious climate activism

#### **The Affects of Knowledge Production**

How and where do religion, feeling, and knowledge production fuse? What is the felt (including erotic) life of scholarship, especially scholarship on religion? What does critique feel like, including capturing knowledge, the thrill of the kill, and intellectual lure? Where does power live in these feelings? What are the affective contours of "living speech" versus "deadening lecture," for instance? Also seeking histories of negotiations between "the passions" and cognitive endeavors as they are construed relative to religion/the gods and/or secularity. cognitive science/reason/sexuality/ancient philosophy

#### **The Affective Life of Sense-making, Truth, and Persuasion in an Age of Alternative Facts**

rhetoric/negotiation/critical theory/social conflict/outrage/adamancy

#### **Affect and Devices**

What are the religious affects of absorption, addiction, obsession, and social mobilization in our pockets?

social media/technology/visual and virtual culture/practices of attention

There will also be a book session (co-sponsored with Ancient Fiction and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative) on Maia Kotrosits' *The Lives of Objects: Material Culture, Experience, and the Real in the History of Early Christianity* (Chicago, 2029). Panelists will be invited.

#### **The Affects of Knowledge Production**

How and where do religion, feeling, and knowledge production fuse? What is the felt (including erotic) life of scholarship, especially scholarship on religion? What does critique feel like, including capturing knowledge, the thrill of the kill, and intellectual lure? Where does power live in these feelings? What are the affective contours of "living speech" versus "deadening

lecture," for instance? Also seeking histories of negotiations between "the passions" and cognitive endeavors as they are construed relative to religion/the gods and/or secularity. cognitive science/reason/sexuality/ancient philosophy

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Kotrosits, Maia, Denison University, maiakotrosits@gmail.com

**Chair** - Parker, Tam K., University of the South, tparker@sewanee.edu

## **Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit**

### **Call Text:**

In addition to general papers and proposals dealing with religion, colonialism, and post-colonialism, we invite papers on the following topics:

- China, Colonialism, Postcolonialism

We invite papers that analyze China – historically and in the present – through the lens of postcolonial studies. We are interested here in both China's increasing transregional and transcontinental role and how a postcolonial lens might be applied to internal Chinese politics and history.

- Decolonizing the Syllabus and Reworking the Canon

We are exploring a possible multi-year focus on actively contributing to a decolonization of religious studies syllabi and to re-working the canon, highlighting and discussing theorists and approaches that are marginalized and deserve closer attention. We are considering multiple ways of doing this: a workshop-like panel discussing e.g. introductory courses in religious studies and actively working on re-writing the syllabus from a decolonial perspective; a panel or roundtable focusing on a particular underestimated theorist and exploring their contribution to the past and future of religious studies. We welcome any proposals of papers or full sessions dealing with such issues and are open to suggestions in advance.

- Author(s)-Meet-Critics: Book Panel

We are also planning to have another book panel in 2020, after the successful panels on books by Birgit Meyer, Richard King, Pamela Klassen/Jennifer Graber, and Chris Driscoll/Monica Miller in the past. Submissions of full panels on a recently published book touching on issues of colonialism and postcolonialism are also welcome, but please contact the co-chairs beforehand if you are interested in developing a book panel with our Unit.

We are also highly interested in papers for a following possible co-sponsored session with the Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Unit:

- Postcolonial Perspectives on Religion and Hip-Hop

We are looking for papers making use of postcolonial theories for an analysis of Religion and Hip-Hop, with a particular interest in Hip-Hop as "diasporic lingua franca" (Fatima El-Tayeb) for dispossessed and marginalized communities and as a tool for de-/anticolonial activism.

Thank you for considering sending a proposal to the Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit and we look forward to seeing you in Boston.

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.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Persaud, Prea, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, ppersaud@ufl.edu

**Chair** - Hermann, Adrian, University of Bonn, adrian.hermann@uni-bonn.de

## **Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit invites proposals on the following topics. Please note we are committed to diversity and thus strongly encourage the use of world cinema and global visual culture products as well as the gender and ethnic diversity of participants. Additionally we expect presenters to incorporate visual media in presentations and ask that all proposals indicate how visuals will be used. We also ask that proposals be clear about their theoretical and methodological approaches and perspectives.

### **2020 Themes and Topics:**

Visual Materials and New Media as the Products of (emerging) Scholarship.

As a *co-sponsored session between the Religion, Film and Visual Culture Unit, and the Comparative Studies in Religion Unit*, we invite proposals concerning the production of non-traditional media as an output of religious studies scholarship. Possible examples include illustration, photography, visual anthropology, media and sonic ethnography, film, or even virtual reality and other digital humanities productions. Proposals should not only include a brief description of what a particular scholar has produced and outline any audiovisual, technological, or space-related needs that will be required for its presentation/performance/demonstration during the session, but also make clear the unique contribution this form of scholarly production makes to the comparative study of religion and visual culture as an academic enterprise. Extra consideration will be given to proposals that offer a compelling rationale for non text-based media as legitimate (read: tenure-worthy) scholarship and/or serve as exemplary models that others might adopt who are hoping to engage in new and emerging forms of scholarly production.

### **Gaming the System.**

We invite proposals exploring the nexus of video games, visual culture, and representation. Video games traffic in visual re-presentations, which raises a number of critical questions that are of perennial concern to scholars of religion. On the one hand, what are the societal, political, ideological, and economic implications of how religion is depicted in video games, especially when those depictions invoke, for example, orientalized or racialized tropes? On the other hand, what do we make of the ways in which the medium can become a space for alternative, perhaps even liberative visions and self-representations, especially among gamers from marginalized social locations? Extra consideration will be given to presentations that incorporate actual play of a game (or games) and/or feature an interactive component of some kind.

### **Pedagogy of Religion and Film.**

We invite proposals that reflect on the question: What are we teaching when we teach religion and film? Film is used frequently in the classroom, either as the main focus of a course on religion/theology and film, or as a pedagogical tool to teach other topics in religious studies or

theology, but the pedagogy of film and religion is underdeveloped. What theoretical frameworks in pedagogy and film studies are presupposed or explicitly engaged? How is the relationship between film and religion theorized, and what pedagogical choices does this motivate? What concrete practices do instructors employ in their teaching? Proposals should include both a substantial engagement with theory and reflections on the practice of teaching.

#### Korean Cinema.

This session invites papers exploring the unique contributions of Korean filmmakers and the various ways in which Korean visual culture intersects with lived religion, atheism, spirituality, apocalypticism, secularism, late/meta-modernity. Any Korean films are welcomed including work by Bong Joon-ho (*Parasite*-winner of the Palme d'Or in 2019), Lee Chang-dong (*Burning*), Bae Yong-kyun (*Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*), So Yong Kim, Im Kwon-Tek, et. al. We encourage analyses of a variety of genres, especially Korean horror, thriller, drama, and experimental films.

#### Provocative Moving Pictures and the Politics of Visual Culture.

We invite proposals for a session focused on how certain films, television shows, and other forms of visual media provoke us to political or social action. How do concrete forms of visual culture expose political or social corruption and inspire us to action? Films may include narrative films based on historical reality (*The Report*, *Dark Waters*, etc) or that subtly encourage political engagement or dissent (e.g., Malick's *A Hidden Life*); meditative documentaries like *Anthropocene*; or episodic, long form streaming shows like *The Politician* or *Watchmen*, or visual art installations, e.g. along the US-Mexico Border.

#### Content Producers.

We invite papers from new media content producers, educators, and students of religion that explore how listening to/learning from content creators might inform/shape/disrupt/animate our teaching and learning.

#### Diasporic Religion

Recognizing we live in a globally-fluid world with significant religious migration, we invite papers that address diasporic religious experience captured visually. From Hulu's new show *Ramy* about an Egyptian-American Muslim growing up in New Jersey to recent documentaries and narrative films like *Buddha in Africa*, *Fire at Sea* and *Capernaum*, this panel will discuss how visual culture expresses diasporic struggle and adaptation, and the role of religion therein. Proposals may focus on filmic materials as well as television, painting and the fine arts, photography or any aspect of visual culture that expresses diasporic religious experience.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit offers a forum for theory and methodology of the visual for those interested in the interdisciplinary study of religion, film, and visual culture. There is no single way to study religion and the visual, and we expect scholars to provide new perspectives on the way we understand visual culture and to provide this understanding through traditional and emerging methodologies.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Solano, Jeanette Reedy, California State University, Fullerton, jsolano@fullerton.edu

**Chair** - Callaway, Kutter, Fuller Theological Seminary, kuttercallaway@fuller.edu

## **Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit seeks proposals that address the dynamics among religion, mass atrocities, and human rights and invites individual proposal submissions and pre-arranged panels for the following co-sponsored calls. The Unit is committed to diversity and inclusivity, and pre-arranged panels should reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate:

#### **Women, Genocide, and Native Peoples**

For a possible quad-sponsorship with the Native Traditions of the Americas Unit, the Women and Religion Unit, the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit, and the North American Religions Unit, we invite proposals that interrogate the role of both religious history and myth in producing and sustaining Indigenous erasure and genocide. We particularly encourage proposals that consider history and myth of the Mayflower, including commemorations like Mayflower 400, in relation to the destruction of the Native Wampanoag Peoples, and the disruption of the Wampanoag matrilineal line. We also invite proposals that further explore the impact of settler colonialism in and beyond the United States, especially those that analyze religion in relation to the genocide of indigenous peoples from a gender perspective in the North American context, including North America in relation to other contexts affected by European settler colonialism (i.e., Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Islands). Proposals that interrogate the widespread killings and disappearance of indigenous women and girls as a form of genocide (e.g., the June 2019 *Canadian National Inquiry*) are welcome. Papers accepted for this session will be considered by *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* for possible inclusion in a focus issue.

#### **Cruel Science and Religion**

For a possible dual-sponsored session with the Science, Technology, and Religion Unit and the Religion, Holocaust and Genocide Unit, we invite papers on cruel science and religion. What are specific ways that “science” and technology have contributed to human rights abuses, genocide, and other mass atrocities? What role has (pseudo)-science played in justifying such tragedies? Specific papers could focus on historical or contemporary examples of the intersection of science and violence (including both the role of technological development in facilitating genocide, and the role of genocide in facilitating technological development through medical experimentation on prisoner populations). Of particular interest are submissions that attend to how religious actors and institutions have abetted or resisted these instances of cruel science. Papers accepted for this session will be considered by *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* for possible inclusion in a focus issue.

#### **Memorializing Oppression and Resistance**

For a possible triad session with the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit, Ritual Studies Unit, and Religion, Memory, and History Unit. In 2020 a new memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. is

due to be unveiled in Boston Common, located at one end of the "Freedom Trail" established in the 1950s along a line of sites associated with American independence and national ideals. It is not the first memorial added to the trail's narrative, with the New England Holocaust Memorial erected in 1995 close to Faneuil Hall and the site of the Boston Massacre. With an eye to this evolving memorial landscape, we invite proposals that analyze the memorialization of oppression and resistance, with relevant topics including: the use of religious symbolism and tradition at memorial locations; memorial sites as mediators of sacred and transformative experience; memorial sites as centers of pilgrimage and ritual; and the intersections among historical contestation, politics, and the religious dimensions of the sites.

#### **Genocide, Human Rights, and Religion in the Latina/o Americas**

For possible co-sponsorship, the Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit and the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit invite paper proposals that connect religion, the Latina/o Americas, and human rights—with particular attention to genocide and genocidal acts. We invite analyses of ways in which governments and religious institutions influence one another in their conceptualizations of and justifications for violence. We are interested in proposals that evaluate Holocaust comparisons and connections. For example: the rhetorical force and practical implications of referring to the Guatemalan genocide as "the silent Holocaust"; debates concerning the description of U.S. border detention centers as "concentration camps"; the 2016 opening of a Holocaust Museum in Guatemala; and the 2018 meeting of the Latin American Network for Education on the Holocaust and Genocide. Additionally, we are particularly interested in papers that attend to the intersections of religion and authoritarianism, human rights, and post-conflict reconciliation and healing. For example: the roles that religious leaders played in the 1996 Guatemalan Peace Accords; the reactions of religious communities to Efrain Rios Montt's genocide and crimes against humanity conviction in 2013; the ritual practices surrounding Ixil Mayan genocide victims, particularly mourning and funerary practices without a body (the disappeared) or an identifiable body (mass graves); the November 2019 lawsuit submitted by Rohingyas and Latin American groups in Argentina under the principle of "universal jurisdiction"; the mass killing of Machupe peoples of Chile in the late 19th-century and their ongoing struggles; the Catholic Church and "Dirty War" of the 1970s and 80s in Argentina; and how Catholics, and increasingly, Evangelicals and Pentecostals, have defended human rights or contributed to coup attempts and human rights abuses in Latin American countries.

#### **Mission Statement:**

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 group treats prominent atrocities of the twentieth century, which is known as "the Age of Genocide." These genocides include the killings of Armenians in Turkey during World War I, the Holocaust, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo, but our topics of interest extend beyond genocides of the twentieth century 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. 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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Temoney, Kate E., Montclair State University, temoneyk@montclair.edu

**Chair** - Vincent, Alana, University of Chester, alana.vincent@gmail.com

## **Religion, Media, and Culture Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religion, Media, and Culture Unit invites individual presentations, paper/multimedia research presentation sessions, and roundtable proposals on the following themes:

- The nature of the book: digital books, the material culture of books in the digital age
- Civility, toxicity, and public discourse: how do we theorize, study, and survive toxic media?
- Embedded journalists and "True Believers": theorizing the role of the journalist and the exposé
- Data tracking and surveillance in global perspective: the 2020 US Census, Facebook and Google data collection, etc.
- Media and trauma: theorizing the (re)mediation of trauma, media as traumatizing or retraumatizing. Examples might include reflections on 9/11, the Handmaid's Tale, the #metoo movement, trigger warnings, etc.
- For a possible session dedicating to teaching religion and media: the gamification of teaching; media and mediating religion in the classroom
- Media, migration, immigration, and refugees
- Ethical formation and media
- Techno-Utopias, Techno-Dystopias, and Technophobias

We are interested in ideas relating to the 2020 Presidential theme, "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild," involving institutional and comparative self-reflections on the field of religion and media studies. For example, the question of marginal voices and the RMC canon: what voices are not present in the canon? What is not present in media theory that we need to theorize religion and media? How do our guild practices form (and cement) different conversations and different publics?

We also invite critical reflections on the generations of digital religion and the role of the guild and the subfield in memorializing moments such as the Arab Spring or the promises imagined in the "Twitter Revolution"? How do scholars assess and think about this now?

The Unit is also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election. Persons interested in being considered for this panel should contact the Unit's co-chairs.

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.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Whitehead, Deborah, University of Colorado, deborah.whitehead@colorado.edu

**Chair** - Reklis, Kathryn, Fordham University, kathryn.reklis@aya.yale.edu

## **Religion, Memory, History Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This Unit provides an opportunity for scholars to engage in the intersection of religion and memory and history. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras. We invite papers, panels, and roundtables on issues that include but are not limited to the following topics:

We invite studies of ghosts and haunting, literal and metaphorical in any time period and any geographic context.

We invite studies of religion, memory, and the state in any time period and any geographic context.

2020 is the 400th anniversary of Plymouth Colony in our host city of Boston. How have religious movements and their memorialization led to new national visions elsewhere across the globe?

2020 is also the 100th anniversary of the first use of the term fundamentalism. Given that the AAR conference theme is on the guild of religious studies, how has the invention of this term haunted the study of religion within and beyond the study of Christianity—and how does it continue to haunt the AAR?

With the Religion and Cities Unit, we invite paper or panel proposals for a potential co-sponsored panel on religion in Boston. We are particularly interested in the history and memories contained and/or evoked by the city's geography and built environment, especially with regard to issues around justice.

With the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit and the Ritual Studies Unit, we invite proposals for a co-sponsored session on memorializing oppression and resistance. In 2020 a new memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. is due to be unveiled in Boston Common, located at one end of the "Freedom Trail" established in the 1950s along a line of sites associated with American independence and national ideals. It is not the first memorial added to the trail's narrative, with the New England Holocaust Memorial erected in 1995 close to Faneuil Hall and the site of the Boston Massacre. With an eye to this evolving memorial landscape, we invite proposals that analyze the memorialization of oppression and resistance, with relevant topics including:

- The use of religious symbolism and tradition at memorial locations
- Memorial sites as mediators of sacred and transformative experience
- Memorial sites as centers of pilgrimage and ritual
- The intersections between historical contestation, politics, and religious dimensions of the sites

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit explores the construction and representation of narratives of the past as memory and history in relation to religious practices, ideologies, and experiences. We encourage critical reflection on religion in relation to ideas of memory, heritage, public history, and historiography. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Gross, Rachel, San Francisco State University, [rbgross@sfsu.edu](mailto:rbgross@sfsu.edu)

**Chair** - Langille, Tim, Arizona State University, [timothy.langille@asu.edu](mailto:timothy.langille@asu.edu)

## **Religion, Sport, and Play Unit**

### **Call Text:**

#### **Shadows, Sins and Profits: Complicating Sport and Play**

The intersections of sport, play and religion often give rise to interpretations that romanticize the role, function, meaning and celebrity of particular events, participants, games, sport or play in general. A hearkening back to a time of innocence, a purity of experience, and even a seeking of perfection in body or performance conceals motivations, actions and consequences that cannot easily be reduced to a matter of ethics alone.

This call seeks proposals that address these dimensions of the shadow side, conceived broadly, of sport and play at all levels. Topics may include, but are not limited to: politicization of sport; commodification of human and animal bodies; commercializing play; exoticization and misrepresentation in team naming and iconography; ritualizing violence; eugenics and the quest for perfection; physical and emotional abuse in sports; risking health for performance and profit; fans behaving badly; economic injustice—the toll on athletes and communities, etc. A diverse range of disciplinary perspectives, religious and spiritual traditions, methodologies, and critiques are encouraged, as well as proposals that engage the Boston area, the site of the 2020 AAR.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Nanko-Fernandez, Carmen Marie, Catholic Theological Union, cnanko@ctu.edu**

**Chair - Scholes, Jeffrey, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, jscholes@uccs.edu**

## **Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit**

### **Call Text:**

As always, we are interested in individual paper and pre-arranged panel proposals that advance interdisciplinary and theoretically innovative analyses of Latina/o/x and Latin American religiosities and spiritualities in the Americas. In addition, we are interested in paper and panel proposals related to the list of topics below, as well book panels, “new format sessions,” and emerging scholarship panels. We also seek individual paper proposals for our two co-sponsored sessions.

Please note: When submitting your proposal, please identify the proposal as either an INDIVIDUAL or PANEL proposal, and please indicate whether you would like to be considered for one of the co-sponsored panels.

This year, we are especially interested in papers and panels that address the following topics:

Religious dimensions of recent unrest and revolts in Latin America, including the religious significance of the revolts for Latina/o/x communities in the US

Indigenous spirituality and the religious significance of place within Indigenous communities.

Latinx and Latin American queer studies.

Latin American and/or Latina/o/x queer communities in the U.S

Theoretical approaches to religion as a category of analysis in the Latino/a/x Americas. In particular, we are interested in papers that explore the co-constitutive nature of race, religion, sexuality, and gender in colonial and post-colonial histories.

Critical discussions of the limits and possibilities of thinking hemispherically for the study of religion in Latin America and Latina/o/x communities in the US. What does doing so allow for? What and who may get left out?

The place of Caribbean communities and religiosity in our scholarly and community concepts of “Latinidad,” particularly in relationship to the French and English speaking Caribbean.

Religion and religiosity in Brazil and Brazilian communities throughout the Americas.

African diasporic religion in Latin America and Latino/a/x communities in the U.S.

Religion and healing in Latin America and the Latin American diaspora in the United States.

### *Prearranged Panel Sessions*

In addition to accepting INDIVIDUAL paper proposals, our Unit will also consider PANEL proposals, which usually consist of 3-4 presenters, along with a moderator and a respondent. In addition to prearranged panel proposals related to our general call and areas of particular interest this year, we also encourage proposals for book panel sessions and emerging scholarship sessions.

### *Book Panel Sessions*

These sessions work best when 2-3 authors work together to propose a panel with a single, overarching theme. Each panelist should submit an individual proposal that makes reference to

the larger theme, and the panel as a whole should determine ahead of time who the respondent(s) will be. These "New Book" sessions are meant not merely to highlight the merits of each book, but, more substantially, to serve as springboards for a larger group discussion (i.e., What broader issues are raised by placing the books in conversation with one another?)

#### *Emerging Scholarship Session*

We encourage 1) doctoral students and recent Ph.D. graduates working in the area of the Latina/o Americas who 2) have never presented at the national AAR meeting to submit papers. To apply, upload your individual paper proposal in the AAR's PAPERS system, explicitly labeling it as an "Emerging Scholarship" submission.

#### *New Format Sessions*

We are interested in exploring alternative panel formats to encourage new modes of discussion. For the upcoming conference in Boston, we are considering panels in which 5-7 participants respond to a single question, each speaking for 6-7 minutes. This will then be followed by an open discussion. In this vein, we invite responses that are no more than 900 words to the following questions:

What are the implications of using the terms Latinx, Latino/a, Latin@, Latine for the hemispheric study of religion the Americas? What are your naming practices and why? What would be an appropriate designation for this Unit in particular, given that our Unit deals with realities pertaining to both Latin American and U.S. Latinx communities?

How do you resolve/approach the most difficult ethical dilemmas of doing religious studies in your particular field and discipline? How do you reconcile the (ethnographic, historical, literary, philosophical) demands of your work in relation to violence, mourning, vulnerability, suffering, exploitation, and power relations among other painful and fraught areas of inquiry?

Please note that your 900-word submission will be your presentation (i.e., no need to write another presentation once you submit to this CFP!)

#### Co-sponsored Sessions:

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, the Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, the Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, we welcome proposals on the topic of "the Labor of Black, Brown, Yellow, and Indigenous Racialized Bodies in/and U.S. Religious Traditions." Proposals for this co-sponsored session may address the following or related questions: How does the concept of labor, with its multiple connotations of both economic production and social reproduction, offer a useful way to make sense of black, brown, yellow, and indigenous racialized bodies' participation in U.S. religious traditions? What distinct kinds of labor have brown, indigenous, yellow, or black racialized people been expected to perform in our own religious communities and/or in predominantly white religious communities? How has labor (productive and/or reproductive) been a site for religious expression and/or resistance to oppression by indigenous, yellow, black, or brown racialized bodies? How have labor hierarchies and the labor of subordinated racial groups been sacralized? How is the religious labor of yellow, black, indigenous or brown racialized people further unequalized by hierarchies of gender and sexuality? Historical, ethnographic, sociological, theological, and critical theory methods are all welcome.

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit and the Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, we invite paper proposals for a panel provisionally titled, "Tracing Religion in Chicanx/Latinx Studies - Genealogies, Contributions, Interlocutors, Omissions."

This session will aim to analyze and assess histories and contemporary trends in the study of religion within the fields of Chicanx and Latinx Studies. Proposals may address the following or related questions: How have contributions from "major figures" and approaches within Chicanx/Latinx Studies shaped the study of religion over the past five decades? What, if any, "schools of thought" have developed in the study of religion within Chicanx/Latinx Studies? What influences and asymmetries exist in engagements between Chicanx/Latinx Studies scholars and scholars doing work in Constructive Theologies? How has Chicanx/Latinx Studies been shaped by the disciplines of theological and religious studies? What are recent trends and emerging approaches to the study of religion within Chicanx/Latinx Studies? What thematic and disciplinary possibilities remain underdeveloped or ignored in the study of religion within Chicanx/Latinx Studies?

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Liberation Theologies Unit; the Comparative Theology Unit; the Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit; and the Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, we invite proposals for a panel provisionally titled, "Land, Revolutions, and the Religious Being: in Search of Political Theologies of Liberation."

For this session, we invite proposals that consider the setting of the 2020 meeting in Boston by examining the relationship between revolutions and land (i.e., Hong Kong, Chile, Paris, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, etc.) in different ways. Possible areas include post-colonial and decolonial critiques of comparative theology and theologies of peace and conflict resolution; theology intersecting at the borders of geography and confessionalism; learning and activism across those same borders; comparative theologies as praxis/therapy for overcoming the impact of tolerance, hate, and conflict; political theologies of liberation in relation to conflict, land and various industrial-complexes (prison, ecological, technological, military, etc.).

Membership is not required to submit a proposal in response to the Call for Papers. However, all participants accepted to the program must be current AAR members and registered for the Annual Meeting by June 15, 2018. Membership waivers are available to participants working outside the field of the study of religion or participants from developing nations. Contact the program Unit chair for more details on how to arrange a waiver.

Questions may be directed to the group's co-chairs.

#### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Delgado, Jessica, Princeton University, [delgado.92@osu.edu](mailto:delgado.92@osu.edu)

**Chair** - Vargas, Daisy, University of Arizona, [daisyvargas@email.arizona.edu](mailto:daisyvargas@email.arizona.edu)

## **Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit welcomes paper and/or panel proposals that explore specific intersections of religious and healing traditions and practices. Proposals should address the socio-political context of the topic, as well as theoretical and analytical framework(s), such as how this analysis helps us to understand religions, medicine, and healing in new ways. For 2020, we are particularly interested in the following themes:

1. Paradigms of the body in light of phenomenological theories; and/or case studies to illustrate and shape theories of embodiment. We strongly prefer proposals that clearly feature ethnographic or other methodologically-grounded research data as support of the theories.
2. RMH and Race: religious dimensions of medical racism; decolonizing religious healing; healing practices that reflect specific cultural/ethnic understandings of the body, healing, and well-being.
3. Multi-faith, multi-religious healing practices; power dynamics of borrowing vs. cultural appropriation of healing; indigenous vs. diasporic approaches to healing; integration of local/indigenous healing rites and Western medical practices
4. Scholar's own experiences of medicine and healing as reflected on their scholarship (examples may include analyses similar to Paul Stoller's 2004 *Stranger in the Village of the Sick: A Memoir of Cancer, Sorcery, and Healing*).
5. Pedagogy: approaches, books, and resources for teaching; thinking beyond textbooks; developing religious studies curricula for students planning to enter health professions.
6. Graduate Students 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. Winners of the prize will be honored at the RMH Business Meeting, following the panel at the conference at which they present the paper.

Eligible students must 1) be actively enrolled in a doctoral program pursuing a research topic in any discipline related to Religions, Medicines, and Healing, 2) have had a paper accepted by the RMH Steering Committee for presentation at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the AAR and 3) have indicated when submitting their proposal that they are applying for the award.

To qualify, the full written paper, along with any related images, must be submitted by email and in its entirety no later than October 1, 2020. Applicants should send their paper to the RMH Graduate Student Paper Award Committee (co-chairs Linda Barnes, [lbarne@bu.edu](mailto:lbarne@bu.edu), Emily Wu, [emily.wu@dominican.edu](mailto:emily.wu@dominican.edu), and Kyrah Malika Daniels, [kyrah.daniels@bc.edu](mailto:kyrah.daniels@bc.edu)) along with 1) a link to your student bio on your institution's official website; or a scan of your student card; or an official letter from your institution; 2) the name of your degree program; and 3) a personal letter verifying that the work is your own.

The Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit is committed to the value of diversity, equity, and social justice in our standards of excellence.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Barnes, Linda L., Boston University, [lbarnes@bu.edu](mailto:lbarnes@bu.edu)

**Chair** - Wu, Emily, Dominican University of California, [emily.wu@dominican.edu](mailto:emily.wu@dominican.edu)

## **Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit**

### **Call Text:**

1) The Religion, Social Conflicts, and Peace Unit invites papers to focus on religion, right wing populism, and nationalism from global and transnational perspectives. We also welcome papers that address the realities and questions around nationalism and religion from a decolonial and intersectional prisms.

2) With the Liberation Theologies Unit, the Comparative Theologies Unit, and the Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, we will co-sponsor a session titled “Land, Revolutions, and the Religious Being: in Search of Political Theologies of Liberation”

We invite proposals for a co-sponsored session that consider the setting of the 2020 meeting in Boston by examining the relationship between revolutions and land (i.e., Hong Kong, Chile, Paris, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, etc.) in different ways. Possible areas include post-colonial and decolonial critiques of comparative theology and theologies of peace and conflict resolution; theology intersecting at the borders of geography and confessionalism; learning and activism across those same borders; comparative theologies as praxis/therapy for overcoming the impact of tolerance, hate, and conflict; political theologies of liberation in relation to conflict, land and various industrial-complexes (prison, ecological, technological, military, etc.).

3) We also invite proposals for the following co-sponsored session:

“Settler Colonialism as an Ecological Structure” as a collaboration with the Religion and Ecology Unit. This session is intended to explore the historical and contemporary contours of coloniality (understood as the logic, culture and structure of our Eurocentric modern world-system) and settler colonialism and their impact on land, resources, environments, and religious/cultural practices and traditions.

4) The Unit is also exploring the possibility of a round-table discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election. [Persons interested in being considered for this panel should contact the Unit's co-chairs.]

5) Possible co-sponsored panel between International Development and Religion Unit and Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit:

“Faith in the humanitarianism-development-peace nexus”

An outcome from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) was the 'New Way of Working' (NWoW), which means that humanitarian, development and peace actors are recommended to work together (the 'triple nexus') ‘to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each sector to reduce need, risk and vulnerability...in accordance with the 2030 SDG agenda’ (Relief Web, no date). The NWoW recognises that although humanitarian, development and peacebuilding are different activities, they are fundamentally linked and organisations focusing on one or more of these should adopt a combined approach to programming (Oxfam 2019). While this is gaining traction in practice and academia, to date the role that religion and faith actors play has been

largely overlooked. There is little focus on religion and faith actors in literature on the NWoW despite evidence that local peacebuilding, development and humanitarian actors, including those that are faith-based, often naturally adopt an integrated approach, but are hampered by a siloed approach to these activities, bolstered by conventions around how donor funds can be used. This panel is interested in papers that explore the ways that faith actors, from international faith-based organisations to local faith actors, approach the humanitarianism-development-peace nexus, the barriers they face and what needs to be done in order to overcome them.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair - Marshall, Ellen Ott, Emory University, ellen\_marshall@emory.edu**

**Chair - Omer, Atalia, University of Notre Dame, aomer1@nd.edu**

## **Religious Conversions Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Individual paper or full paper/panel session proposals (with a preference for the latter) are welcome on any topic related to religious conversion, including, but not limited to the following panel topics in which the Religious Conversions Unit is particularly interested in featuring this year:

Migration, Borders, Walls, and Conversion - conversion issues surrounding migration, open vs. closed borders, etc. (Edith Szanto, [edith.szanto@gmail.com](mailto:edith.szanto@gmail.com))

Conversion and Deconversion across the Globe: The growth of Christianity in the Global South raises questions concerning the nature of conversion: How has global migration impacted the phenomenon of conversion itself, both individually and socially? Is conversion re-construed when a religion's adherents migrate? Does conversion then admit, for example, the possibility of Multiple Religious Participation? How does conversion en masse affect the social fabric of communities? The Religious Conversions Program Unit and Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Theologies Program Unit invite proposals focusing on the phenomenon of conversion in light of globalization and migration. We especially welcome proposals engaging multiple disciplinary approaches. (for a possible co-sponsored session with the Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Theologies Program Unit )

Rambo Reconsidered - Defining and theorizing religious conversion (Athanasios Despotis, [despotis@uni-bonn.de](mailto:despotis@uni-bonn.de))

Conversion and Climate Change - could include religious conversion, properly speaking, but also conversion to and from climate change acceptance or denial; climate change and apocalypticism; and a number of other related topics (Linda Mercadante, [LMercadante@mtso.edu](mailto:LMercadante@mtso.edu) and Eliza Kent, [ekent@skidmore.edu](mailto:ekent@skidmore.edu))

"Conversion," "Call," or Something Else: Revisiting What Happened to Paul on the Road to Damascus - This is for a possible co-sponsorship with the Society of Biblical Literature's Biblical Exegesis from Eastern Orthodox Perspectives program Unit (Athanasios Despotis, [despotis@uni-bonn.de](mailto:despotis@uni-bonn.de))

Conversion and Political Extremism - correlations and/or causation in simultaneous changes of religious and political extremist conversions; Trump supporters and religion; interplay of religion and politics in abrupt shifts in support for particular extremist political figures, etc. Alexander Hwang, [alexander.y.hwang@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.y.hwang@gmail.com))

Conversion and the Demise of the Nation-State (Michael McLaughlin, [mtmclaug@odu.edu](mailto:mtmclaug@odu.edu))

The person whose name is listed in parentheses has expressed an interest in organizing the panel so please contact them if you have questions or are interested in presenting in such a session.

**Mission Statement:**

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
- Hybridity
- 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 until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Pugliese, Marc, Saint Leo University, marcpug@gmail.com

**Chair** - Mercadante, Linda A., Methodist Theological School in Ohio, lmercadante@mtso.edu

## Ricoeur Unit

### Call Text:

Paul Ricoeur and Feminist Hermeneutics after Pamela Sue Anderson

Few scholars have done more to articulate Ricoeur's significance for the study of religion, and none has done more to move his thought in the direction of feminist philosophy of religion than Pamela Sue Anderson (1955-2017). Anderson's untimely death at 62 has deprived us of her continuing insights, but her influence on Ricoeur studies, feminist hermeneutics, and the philosophy of religion is very much alive. The Ricoeur Unit seeks proposals exploring Anderson's influence on Ricoeur studies, feminist hermeneutics, ethics, and philosophy of religion. Possible topics include:

- The importance of philosophy for feminist theory and the importance of feminist perspectives in philosophy
- A feminist philosophy of religion
- Concepts of selfhood and identity
- Embodiment
- Vulnerability
- Love, hospitality, and desire
- Epistemic locatedness
- Memory and justice
- Rationality and myth

### The Style of the Public Square

Political discourse today has become sharply divisive; and divisive precisely around fault lines defined by religious and secular visions and practices - hypertheism and overhumanization. Scholars in Religion and Humanism have already diagnosed how the problem of "evacuating the center" afflicts current political debate and calls for a third way. Paul Ricoeur, whose work lies at the intersection of religion and humanism, provides a way to understand how to frame the conversational space between these opposing perspectives—even in an increasingly polemicized environment.

This Ricoeur Unit session will focus on the style of political language as a substantive political question. Historically, the study of rhetoric and style has been central to humanism as an intellectual movement. Moreover, Ricoeur studied ideology and utopia as genres of political discourse, wrote an essay on "The Fragility of Political Language," and modeled difficult dialogue among divergent viewpoints in his own writings. The session will question how Ricoeur's approach to language and interpretation can provide tools to counter the reductive thinking that riddles the public sphere.

For this session, we seek proposals that examine contemporary US politics in terms of the style, genre and rhetoric of political language. We invite papers that:

- 1: Address how Ricoeur's style, which put rival points of view into unexpectedly fruitful conversation, enhance public political debates
- 2: address how Ricoeur provides a model for navigating a public square where religion and

humanism can meet as partners in democratic dialogue.

3: Analyze how political style embodies particular ideological or policy stances, achieves or impedes political goals, and distorts or enables political dialogue.

4: Addresses the normative question of how religious discourse can contribute to renewing democratic dialogue rather than impeding it.

**Mission Statement:**

The purpose of this Unit is to promote the work of Paul Ricoeur within the broad fields of theology, religious studies, and the study of sacred texts. We believe that Paul Ricoeur, as a dialogue partner, has continued relevance to the manifold disciplines that constitute the AAR. Yet more than a Unit dedicated to the study of a particular scholar's work, this Unit seeks to build up and creatively utilize Ricoeur's work in a way that enriches a wide range of theological and religious subdisciplines.

**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:**

**Chair** - Hall, W. David, Centre College, wdavid.hall@centre.edu

**Chair** - Whitehouse, Glenn, Florida Gulf Coast University, gwhiteho@fgcu.edu

## Ritual Studies Unit

### Call Text:

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. 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.

Whenever possible, our sessions will be formatted to encourage interaction and group discussion on the basis of concise, pre-circulated papers of no more than five pages submitted for circulation by October 15, 2020. 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.

**Memorializing Oppression and Resistance.** For a possible triad session with the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit; Ritual Studies Unit; and Religion, Memory, and History Unit. In 2020 a new memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. is due to be unveiled in Boston Common, located at one end of the "Freedom Trail" established in the 1950s along a line of sites associated with American independence and national ideals. It is not the first memorial added to the trail's narrative, with the New England Holocaust Memorial erected in 1995 close to Faneuil Hall and the site of the Boston Massacre. With an eye to this evolving memorial landscape, we invite proposals that analyze the memorialization of oppression and resistance, with relevant topics including: the use of religious symbolism and tradition at memorial locations; memorial sites as mediators of sacred and transformative experience; memorial sites as centers of pilgrimage and ritual; and the intersections among historical contestation, politics, and the religious dimensions of the sites.

**Embodied Rituals: Mantra, Tantra and Yoga.** A pre-arranged co-sponsored "show and tell" session with the Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit. Panelists will present the rituals and practices of mantra, tantra and yoga in both a theoretical and practical way will be followed by two ritual studies respondents. Each panelist will look at performance as a paradigm of ritual action through the demonstration of three particular embodied spiritual traditions.

**Daoism and ritual theory.** This roundtable will focus on the Daoist concept of true/real (*zhen* 真). This term frequently appears in Daoist ritual manuals and explications of the efficacy of ritual practices. In this roundtable, we want to explore whether the term *zhen* may have conceptual relevance beyond the field of Chinese studies. To do so, the roundtable will discuss Poul Andersen's *The Paradox of Being: Truth, Identity and Images in Daoism*. We are looking for interested scholars outside of sinology that would like to partake in the roundtable and team up with an expert in Daoist studies to read Poul Andersen's book. Ideally, these conversations will lead to some fruitful thoughts about how Andersen's discussion of *zhen* might offer new insights to each contributor's own research. If you are interested in becoming part of this roundtable, please send an email to [tzuern@wustl.edu](mailto:tzuern@wustl.edu).

Rituals of grief and mourning. We invite papers on rituals of grief and mourning in connection with death, miscarriage, personal or collective tragedy, or environmental or social disasters, notably those emphasizing the ritualized expression of emotions.

Rituals of organizations. We invite papers on rituals of organizations, those connected with financial transactions or corporate branding, but also rituals used within organizations broadly defined (not just businesses) for promoting loyalty, facilitating cohesion, celebrating collective identities, etc.

Rituals of crowds and public protests. We are interested in exploring ritual involving crowds or occasioned by public protests of either a spontaneous or planned nature.

Ritual Theory: We invite papers that engage with the “ritual theory canon.” Relevant papers may be purely theoretical or inspired by particular case studies; they may offer new approaches to understanding and utilizing “canonical” ritual theorists or propose new theoretical resources for ritual studies scholarship. We are particularly interested in the theme of *sacrifice* as a core element of ritual theory, and in *pedagogical strategies* and experiences as they relate to issues of ritual theory.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Pike, Sarah M., California State University, Chico, spike@csuchico.edu

**Chair** - Houseman, Michael, École Pratique des Hautes Études, jmichaelhouseman@gmail.com

## Roman Catholic Studies Unit

### Call Text:

The Roman Catholic Studies Unit invites submissions on diverse subjects in Catholic Studies. We are interested in proposals that are attentive to the ways in which history and theory relate to one another within the field of Roman 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 2020 meeting in Boston, Massachusetts:

Catholic Men and Masculinities – A joint session of the Roman Catholic Studies Unit and the Men, Masculinities, and Religion Unit invite historical and ethnographic papers that explore gender, masculinities, and the making of men in Catholic spaces. We seek papers that think explicitly about the processes of Catholic formation, power, materiality, and gender together to examine the lives of clerics, priests, seminarians, and lay men. We especially invite papers that explore transnational and global Catholic masculinities and papers on the following topics: (1) sexual abuse, masculinity, and power; (2) clerical masculinities and the lives of priests; (3) masculinities in/and seminarians; (4) the materiality of Catholic masculinities (vestments, costumes, objects, rituals, devotions); (5) lives of lay men (religious organizations, ritual, parish life, masculinities and the family); and (6) the practice of gay, queer, trans, and non-binary Catholics.

Catholicism in 10 Objects – Roman Catholicism is known for its material and physical paraphernalia. From sacramentals and relics to statues and rosaries, the lives of Catholics are filled with meaningful things. But alongside such obviously Catholic stuff, there are many “ordinary” objects that demarcate Catholic identities or are associated with Catholic experiences. We invite scholars to identify one object (big or small, two dimensional or three dimensional, past or present) that captures the materiality of Catholicism in specific social and cultural contexts. Presenters will be expected to provide visual representations of the object and to speak for approximately 3-5 minutes about the Catholic-ness of the object (whatever that means). Taken together, the presentations of the objects are meant to foster a larger discussion about the material culture of Catholicism and the diversity (gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, nationality) of Catholic experiences and perspectives as witnessed in material form.

Media Representations of Clerical Sex Abuse Before and After *Spotlight* – *Spotlight*, the 2015 film that profiled the investigative work of *The Boston Globe*, brought considerable attention to clerical sex abuse in the Archdiocese of Boston and throughout the United States. Thirty years earlier, a local investigative reporter in the Diocese of Lafayette (Louisiana) did the same, exposing national audiences to the serial molestation of children by a priest and the systematic coverup by a bishop. Given the decades of exposure, we seek papers that critically examine media representations (journalism, documentaries, dramatic portrayals) of clerical sex abuse and the Roman Catholic Church in the United States and around the world. What kinds of questions have guided reporting on clerical sex abuse? Are there questions left unasked or

unanswered? With the recent disclosures of lists of “credibly accused” priests by dioceses and religious orders, what is the current state of media representations of sex abuse by Catholic priests, deacons, and women religious? What work is still to be done? What role have survivors of sexual abuse played in past and present representations? What has been the role of scholars of Catholic studies in such representations, and how might they continue to participate into the future?

**Classics Revisited** – Texts that were once considered classics often end up exposed in the light of new forms of critique, fresh ideas, and new perspectives. But sometimes older works that have long been considered faded remnants of a bygone era continue to provide their own light in the secrecy of individual hearts and minds. We invite scholars to confess these affinities, by bringing our attention to a single classic work that has been inspiring, compelling, powerful, or even irreplaceable (even if secretly) in their scholarly writing about Catholics and Catholicism. Even if you must chaste or revise the work in light of subsequent scholarly developments, papers should focus primarily on what the work offers in the way of positive, generative, and exciting possibilities. Proposals should name the text, explain its value in specific and detailed ways, and outline a plan for a five minute “pitch” for why their fellow scholars should revisit this work.

**50th Anniversary of the National Office for Black Catholics** – 2020 marks the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the National Office for Black Catholics, an organization endorsed by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA) and serving for many years as an umbrella group for the National Black Clergy Caucus, the National Black Sisters Conference, and the National Black Lay Catholic Caucus. In honor of this history of Black Catholic institution building, we invite proposals for papers or panels that will explore the legacy of Black Catholic institution-building not only in the U.S. but in hemispheric and diasporic perspectives. In the fifty years since this organization’s founding, how have Black Catholic organizations fared in their mission? How have hemispheric and diasporic perspectives challenged or changed the meanings of Black Catholicism and its structures, possibilities, and relationships with the wider church?

**Formation of Conscience** – The “formation of conscience” has long been a special preoccupation of Catholic theologians, pastors, and teachers. For much of modern Catholic history, this discourse has elevated issues of reproduction as areas of primary or even sole concern. As a consequence, many have tuned out Catholic “conscience talk” as irretrievably narrow or myopic. But Catholic thinking about conscience in fact extends beyond issues of reproduction and may in fact offer resources for contending with contemporary problems of the most basic significance, including racism, sexism, and the destruction of the earth’s ecosystems. With these and other possibilities in mind, we invite proposals for papers or panels on Catholic ideas and disciplines related to the “formation of conscience” in areas exceeding the familiar terrain of sex and sexuality. We seek work that explores the very idea of “formation” and opens up thinking about the moral, personal, and theological meaning of conscience in light of contemporary threats to human solidarity, opportunity, and existence.

We urge all paper and panel proposals actively to address questions of format and timing. It is the Roman Catholic Studies Unit’s preference to have individual papers never exceed 12 minutes in length and for every panel to include well-planned allotment of time for audience

involvement. We strongly encourage proposals that include innovative, interactive, and dynamic formats.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides a scholarly forum to study the global Roman 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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Seitz, John, Fordham University, [jseitz@fordham.edu](mailto:jseitz@fordham.edu)

**Chair** - Pasquier, Michael, Louisiana State University, [mpasquier@lsu.edu](mailto:mpasquier@lsu.edu)

## **Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit invites proposals from scholars and/or activists that closely analyze the use of sacred and foundational religious texts, including commentaries, in ethical or political discourse (either contemporary or historical). We welcome individual papers and panel proposals from all religious traditions and methodologies, including constructive ethical reflection with a textual basis. Proposals on all topics are welcome. We are particularly interested in the following topics:

- The intersection of danger or death in sacred texts and how we might assess this intersection from the standpoint of ethics. Proposals should consider dangerous moments in confrontation with a deity or other figure in one or more religious traditions. Readings vary on these texts from confrontation to apologetics. We are particularly interested in new reading strategies and the ways in which theologians and other readers advance interpretations related to ethics.
- The relationship between ethics and contemplative reading strategies (and related contemplative practices) across both Eastern and Western religious traditions. Proposals from interreligious perspectives are especially encouraged.
- Following a successful 2019 panel around our perennial call for papers on sacred texts and material culture, we are interested in sponsoring a related session in 2020 on ethics and the production of physical copies of sacred text. We welcome proposals around the following topics: (a) labor practices connected to the physical production of sacred texts; (b) natural resources and the production of sacred texts; (c) sacred texts and global distribution; and (d) other related topics.
- Sacred texts and material culture, particularly the ethical and political uses of sacred texts as material objects.
- Uses of sacred texts in interreligious contexts or considerations of sacred texts shared or contested by two or more traditions.
- The relationship between different textual genres (narrative, legal, poetry, letters, etc.) and religious ethics.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit invites scholars and activists across the disciplines to critically consider (or re-consider) the complex and enduring role of scriptural and foundational religious texts in the contemporary world as well as historically, and to theorize the roles these texts play in ethical reflection, lived religious practice, and political debate.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Atkinson, Tyler, Bethany College, atkinsonts@bethanylb.edu

**Chair** - Goldstein, Elizabeth, Gonzaga University, goldstein@gonzaga.edu

## **Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction Unit**

### **Call Text:**

- OPEN CALL: We especially welcome and privilege panel proposals of every topic related to the themes of this Unit. As a commitment of this Unit, successful pre-arranged session or panel proposal must be attentive to gender and racial diversity.
- Recent trends, books, or themes in constructive theology.
- Recent entanglements of constructive theology and biblical texts.
- Theorists engaging constructive theological or textual thought.
- Papers working on intersectionality, critical race theory, ecocriticism, decolonial studies, disability or gender or sexuality studies.
- Political theology: its recent trends, uses of sacred texts, conversation partners
- Papers or panels that think constructively or textually about Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, entering its 40th anniversary in 2020. We at least plan that one session will be a pre-arranged panel on DandG's book and its themes. This session will be co-sponsored by the Reading, Theory and the Bible Unit of SBL and potentially the Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit of AAR.
- We seek papers/presentations that are reflections in response to the newly revised New Revised Standard Version of the Bible as an act of translation, production of an Academic Guild, or theological construction. Specifically, we seek theoretical reflections on the art of translation with respect to questions of culture, race, and community. Distant or recent histories of translations of biblical texts as they might shed light on translation in this cultural and political moment, ethnographically-grounded reflections on translations of biblical texts, and theories of translation as they negotiate, answer, or absent questions of culture, race, and community especially welcome.
- Papers or panels that wrestle with the Presidential Theme, "AAR as Academic Guild."

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Maia, Filipe, Boston University, fmaia@bu.edu

**Chair** - Erickson, Jacob, Trinity College, Dublin, jacobjerickson@gmail.com

## **Schleiermacher Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We seek paper proposals that explore the topics of *love and power* in relation to Schleiermacher's philosophy and theology. Proposals are welcome that critically examine love in relation to power, or that engage one of the two. Possible themes related to love from historical, philosophical, theological, cultural, and constructive perspectives might include: divine and human love, intersubjectivity and community, relationships between doctrine and ethics, relationships between love and sin/evil/hate, love and eschatology, love in Schleiermacher's theological work. Possible themes related to power might include: divinity and power (i.e., divine causality), Christ and power, democracy, fascism, populism, and war in the contemporary global context.

For a co-sponsored session with the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Unit, we seek proposals for papers that explore the identity and activity of the *Spirit of God*. We especially welcome papers that engage both a Pentecostal or Charismatic view and the views of Friedrich Schleiermacher. Paper proposals might address, for example, how individuals and groups experience the Spirit in the Church, what the relation is, between the Spirit and Christ, how the Spirit helps Christians to discern personal and social sin, how the Spirit renews or deepens relationships with God, how views about the Spirit and views about faith and hope interrelate, what are the differences between finite spirits and God the Spirit. We also invite proposals that focus on the value of Schleiermacher's pneumatology and Pentecostal or Charismatic pneumatologies for generative theological work on particular political, social, ecological, or economic challenges.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit promotes scholarship--from specialists and non-specialists alike--that critically engages the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). We encourage historical, textual, and constructive analyses that open new lines of inquiry into Schleiermacher's oeuvre and contribute to contemporary discussions in theology, religious studies, philosophy, ethics, and hermeneutics.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Waggoner, Ed, Brite Divinity School, ed.waggoner@tcu.edu**

## **Science, Technology, and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Religion, Science, and Technology Group seeks paper and panel proposals on the following themes:

- **Cruel Science and Religion**

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion, Holocaust and Genocide Unit, we invite papers on cruel science and religion. What are specific ways that the uses of science and technology have contributed to human rights abuses, genocide, and other mass atrocities? What role has science (or perhaps, pseudo-science) played in justifying such tragedies? Specific papers could focus on historical or contemporary examples of the intersection of science and violence (including both the role of technological development in facilitating genocide, and the role of genocide in facilitating technological development through medical experimentation on prisoner populations). Of particular interest are submissions that attend to how religious actors and institutions have abetted or resisted these instances of cruel science. Papers accepted for this session will be considered by *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* for possible inclusion in a focus issue.

- **Science and Ethics**

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Ethics Unit. Technological developments often pose obviously ethical questions for religious traditions. Do scientific developments (e.g., the Copernican revolution / evolution / Big Bang / plate tectonics) also pose ethical questions for religious traditions? If so, how? And do these scientifically induced questions differ in kind from the ethical questions that technological developments prompt?

- **Science and Secularism**

What roles do science, technology, and religion play in shaping secular life? How do different religious traditions participate in the making of scientific knowledge and/or technological innovation? How might religious studies scholarship help us to understand ongoing contestations about nature, ecology, and the human?

**Ethics**

- **The “Field” of Science and Religion**

In light of the 2020 AAR theme, we invite papers that reflect upon the scholarly guild with respect to the field of science and religion. How have intellectual trends influenced the development of science and religion over the past fifty years? Has the field of science and religion made any intellectual contributions to other fields, or does it only import theories from other disciplines? How successful have scholars been at engaging in robust conversations across different fields and communities? Is the field unified in some way or is it inherently pluralistic, even with respect to the sciences? Who is the audience that science and religion scholarship is trying to reach (e.g., scientists, religious communities, the science and religion guild)?

- **Time**

What are the sciences discovering about time (e.g., recent results on time-reversal in quantum experiments reopen the debate about A time vs B time.) In what ways should recent scientific explorations of time affect thinking in various religions?

Finally, STR is always open to paper proposals or panels that do not fit any of these particular parameters.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Reeves, Josh, Samford University, [jareeves@samford.edu](mailto:jareeves@samford.edu)

**Chair** - Cootsona, Greg, California State University, Chico, [gcootsona@csuchico.edu](mailto:gcootsona@csuchico.edu)

## **Scriptural Reasoning Unit**

### **Call Text:**

In recent years, the critical turn toward animals has challenged scholars of religion to revisit the role and significance of animals in their respective traditions, as well as the distinctions these traditions have long made between human life and that of all other animals. This year, we invite submissions of short papers (8-10 minutes) that engage the theme of animals in the scriptural traditions of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. Topics might include:

- the relationship between animals and human beings or God
- animals behaving like humans or humans behaving like animals
- animals in law
- animals in prophecy
- animals and food
- ethical obligations toward animals

Papers should be narrowly focused on a short passage from the Tanakh, New Testament, or Qur'an, but the approach or method is open - participants might explore classical commentaries, modern interpretations, etc. The goal is to examine one way that the tradition has engaged this particular theme and sketch its implications as a jumping off point for a larger discussion between traditions. To that end, this session will be conducted in an experimental format that combines paper presentations with a subsequent text study session.

### **Mission Statement:**

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 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Elser, Ashleigh, Hampden-Sydney College, ade5we@virginia.edu

**Chair** - James, Mark, Hunter College, mcjames@caspia.com

## **Secularism and Secularity Unit**

### **Call Text:**

1. We welcome papers on the future of secularism and the study of secularity/secular people. We are interested in interrogating the state of the field and what comes next for these areas of study within the academic study of religion.
2. The Sexist Secular: We invite papers that explore the following questions: How should scholars theorize the relationship between patriarchy and secularism? How do formations of the secular map onto formations of gender, and particularly formations of hegemonic masculinity (i.e. Jordan Peterson, the Red Pill, authoritarian political projects)? We seek papers that bring interdisciplinary lenses to bear on these themes as they arise in popular and political culture, as well as within academic formulations of secular studies.
3. Science Fiction and Secular Apocalypses: We invite papers for a potential co-sponsored panel with the Religion and Science Fiction program Unit: We are interested in work that addresses any aspect of the dystopic that may overlap with the secular imaginary regarding phenomena such as climate change, authoritarianisms, genocide, etc.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Secularism and Secularity Unit explores a broad 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Onishi, Bradley, Skidmore College, bradley.b.onishi@gmail.com**

**Chair** - Hulsether, Lucia, Yale University, lucia.hulsether@yale.edu

## **Sikh Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

#### **1. Space**

What is Sikh space? Scholarly discussions of religious space have tended to focus on the philosophical or on the physical and territorial registers of ‘space.’ More recently, scholars have turned their attention to deterritorialized and digital spaces, particularly in the field of Diaspora Studies. The Sikh Studies Unit invites papers that broaden, challenge, or produce conceptions of ‘Sikh space.’ We encourage proposals that address the relation between abstract deterritorialized spaces and specific forms of location, context, rootedness, and territorialization. How might productive tension between space and place facilitate new theoretical, discursive, or activist practices in and beyond the academy.

#### **2. Feminism, Women, and Gender in Religion**

The Women and Religion Unit and the Sikh Studies Unit are seeking papers for a possible co-sponsored session. The co-sponsored session seeks papers that critically engage with diasporic, postcolonial, and transnational theories and/or methodological approaches relating to feminism, women, and gender in religion. We particularly encourage proposals that address i) women’s agency, and the lack thereof, in religious scripture, institutions, and devotional praxis, and ii) social and cultural practices and their discursive frameworks relating feminist and gendered approaches to women. We encourage papers that build on the recent and emerging body of scholarship in the proposers specific subfield(s) and investigate how feminist knowledge production within and across religious traditions have the potential to subvert and transform hegemonic notions of power including the symbolic, linguistic, political, communal, and interpersonal. What would it look like to reorient our religious institutions, praxis, and identity through a feminist lens that advocates more egalitarian ways of knowing and being?

#### **3. Embodiment**

The Sikh Studies Unit invites paper proposals that interrogate the idea of ‘embodiment’ in Sikh ways of knowing and practice. Intersectional diversity – in terms of method, theory, and disciplinary field of specialization - is encouraged within and between proposals. We welcome proposals that engage with ‘embodiment’ through Sikh music, poetry, literature, katha, memory, pedagogy, and practices such as seva, nam simran, japa, and yoga. Engagement with social, cultural, gendered, literary, and historical registers of embodiment are also encouraged. How do these embodied expressions and experiences relate to Sikh knowledge production and identity formation? In what ways do they inform Sikh self-understanding and engagement in the world? What points of tension do different understandings of embodiment produce, and how might these tensions facilitate new theoretical, discursive, or activist practices in and beyond the academy.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides a forum for highlighting the most recent and innovative scholarship in the area of Sikh studies. Our work draws from a broad range of methodological and theoretical approaches — history, postcolonial theory, performance theory, popular culture, philosophy, literary criticism, gender studies, etc. — by both established scholars as well as those new to the field. Seeking a balance between critical theory and substantive content, we seek to call into question key critical terms, challenge established frames of reference, and offer innovative and alternative ways in which Sikhs and Sikhism can be understood and studied in the academy.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Hawley, Michael, Mount Royal University, mhawley@mtroyal.ca

**Chair** - Khalsa, Nirinjan, Loyola Marymount University, nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu

## **Sociology of Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The purpose of the Sociology of Religion program Unit of the American Academy of Religion is to bridge the gap and 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 Boston (and the contributions of prominent sociologists in the region)
- Links between capitalism, consumerism, neoliberalism and climate change issues
- Conflicting identities (intersectional identities in conflict)
- Disciplinary boundaries between sociology of religion and religious studies
- Sociology of knowledge – especially an exploration of the relationship between religion and STEM
- In anticipation of the 2020 US Election, we are interested in panels that are NOT about Trump and do not perpetuate a narrative of American exceptionalism (i.e. panels that explore religion alongside politics, elections, national identity, race, and populism in a global context)

We are also in the process of planning sessions on the following topics:

- Revisiting Religion and the Public Sphere (prearranged session on Habermas' new work)
- Co-sponsored with the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Program Unit: Putting the social back into the sociology of religion (and religious studies in general): a round table with Veronique Altglas (invited panel discussion)

### **Publication:**

The Sociology of Religion Group of AAR regularly co-sponsors panels with the peer-reviewed print and online journal *Critical Research on Religion (CRR)* (<http://crr.sagepub.com>). Published by SAGE Publications, the journal is ranked as first tier by Scopus and has over 10,000 subscriptions worldwide. Presenters of promising papers in SOR panels will be invited to turn their papers into articles and submit them for peer review to CRR.

### **Mission Statement:**

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 comparative-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.

**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:**

**Chair - King, Rebekka**, Middle Tennessee State University, rebekka.king@mtsu.edu

**Chair - Hoesly, Dusty**, University of Southern Mississippi, hoesly@ucsb.edu

## **Space, Place, and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

We welcome individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtable proposals for topics exploring space and place as they relate to religion. We are particularly 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 also 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. We desire to have one session focusing on religious spaces in Asia. This year we particularly interested in sessions on the following topics:

- **The Space of the State (co-sponsored with Religion and Politics Unit)**

We seek papers that analyze examples of religious places and spaces that are made or developed by the political state. Possible themes could address mechanics of religious places' development and the means by which a state sanctifies the nation as sacred space, kinds of religious space(s) states create, and applying spatial theory and methodologies to help think through the entanglements state actions create with historically sacred landscapes and places. We especially seek papers that address examples of how specific states create and authorize religious places and spaces.

Please contact Joanne Waghorne ([jpwaghorn@syr.edu](mailto:jpwaghorn@syr.edu)) with a short description of your proposal if interested in submitting.

- **Methodological Approaches to Space and Place in the Study of Religion**

Papers focusing on specific methodologies – both established and newly emerging -- to apply to analysis of religious spaces and places. We are particularly interested in papers that explore the use of various geospatial technologies to document and analyze religion(s).

Please contact Katie Oxx ([koxx@sju.edu](mailto:koxx@sju.edu)) with a short description of your proposal if interested in submitting.

- **Plymouth Rock (1620)**

In light of the fourth centenary of the landing at Plymouth Rock, We are particularly interested in papers that address geographical/topographical markers of meaningful space, such as stones, trees, and shorelines, and pilgrimage to them. We are also interested in papers that explore the shifting religious and spatial imaginaries in the context of settlement and the colonial encounter. Papers focusing on the artistic, literary, and religious dimensions of the arrival of pilgrims in Massachusetts may constitute a co-sponsored panel with the Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit.

- **Place and Religious Performance (co-sponsored with the Anthropology of Religion)**

Papers that analyze the relationship between space, place and religious performance. Possible themes include without being limited to spatial analyses of the way the emplacement and movement of body(-ies) affect the places and spaces in which they perform; the way spaces and places foster or complicate ritual performance; performing arts in/creating/subverting sacred spaces; religious performances that traverse diverse spaces and places.

Please contact Joy Palacios ([joy.palacios@ucalgary.ca](mailto:joy.palacios@ucalgary.ca)) with a short description of your proposal if interested in submitting.

- Religion, Literature, and the City in South Asia (co-sponsored with Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit and Religion in South Asia Unit)

The panel explores the various ways in which religions in urban South Asia are (re)presented in modern literature, particularly regarding spatiality, representations of space, space as an agent in modern urban life.

Please contact: István Keul ([istvan.keul@uib.no](mailto:istvan.keul@uib.no)) with a short description of your proposal if interested in submitting.

- Book Panel: *Buddhist Tourism in Asia* (Prearranged session)

Brooke Schedneck and Courtney Brunt, editors, *Buddhist Tourism in Asia* (2020).

Four specialists in Buddhist studies will comment on the book, with response from editors Schedneck and Bruntz.

#### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

#### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

#### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Schedneck, Brooke, Rhodes College, [schedneckb@rhodes.edu](mailto:schedneckb@rhodes.edu)

**Chair** - Graham, Susan L., Saint Peterand#039;s University, [sgraham@saintpeters.edu](mailto:sgraham@saintpeters.edu)

## **Student Lounge Roundtable**

### **Call Text:**

The Student Lounge Roundtable Series (SLRS) consists of a series of roundtable conversations/workshops dedicated to the professional development and current needs of graduate students. These roundtable conversations/workshops are meant to encourage dialogue, learning, and collaboration that allow graduate students to engage with the various topics in a collegial setting. Rather than being traditional conference presentations, the SLRS workshops are meant to stimulate discussion and learning over a particular area of focus. The Graduate Student Committee sponsors this series. The workshops are led by graduate students, professors, and other professionals with relevant expertise to offer.

The Graduate Student Committee invites scholars of religion to share their hard-earned wisdom in the Student Lounge Roundtable Series. We are looking for individuals who will be responsible for leading a conversation or workshop (60-90 minutes) about a topic of practical interest to student members. A variety of formats are welcome. Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Publicly-engaged scholarship
- Activism and the academy
- Online resources and computer programs to aid research, writing, or teaching
- Managing a specific stage of graduate school (courses, exams, thesis, ABD, etc.)
- Research project design or methods
- Balancing graduate school with other dimensions of life and identity
- Coping with the mental and emotional pressures of graduate school and/or the job search
- Strategies for thriving as a member of an underrepresented community in the academy
- Creating or managing an online presence (websites, blogging, online portfolios, etc.)
- Job market (applications, interviews, etc.)
- Careers outside of the academy
- Publishing (open access vs. peer review; alternative forms of publishing, etc.)
- Teaching (activities, online, technology, controversial issues, etc.)
- Networking
- Grant-writing
- CV writing

Please note: Submissions to the SLRS do NOT count toward the two-proposal submission limit within the PAPERS system.

Please send a brief proposal (~150 words) and a CV to Abby Kulisz ([alkulisz@iu.edu](mailto:alkulisz@iu.edu)) and Kaitlyn Lindgren-Hansen ([kaitlyn-lindgren@uiowa.edu](mailto:kaitlyn-lindgren@uiowa.edu)) by March 1, 2020 and indicate if you are willing to co-present if your topic aligns with another proposal. Roundtable time slots are flexible. If accepted, please be prepared to create a short video to be used by the GSC for publicity purposes prior to the annual conference.

**Mission Statement:**

The Student Lounge Roundtable Series (SLRS) consists of a series of roundtable conversations/workshops dedicated to the professional development and current needs of graduate students. These roundtable conversations/workshops are meant to encourage dialogue, learning, and collaboration that allow graduate students to engage with the various topics in a collegial setting. Rather than being traditional conference presentations, the SLRS workshops are meant to stimulate discussion and learning over a particular area of focus. The Graduate Student Committee (GSC) sponsors this series. The workshops are led by graduate students, professors, and other professionals with relevant expertise to offer.

Please note: Submissions to the SLRS do NOT count toward the two-proposal submission limit within the PAPERS system.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

**Method of submission:**

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Patel, Aarti, Syracuse University, aartipatel16@gmail.com

**Chair** - Lindgren-Hansen, Kaitlyn, University of Iowa, kaitlyn-lindgren@uiowa.edu

**Chair** - Kulisz, Abby, Indiana University, alkulisz@umail.iu.edu

**Chair** - Jackson, Marchell, mjackson@aarweb.org

## **Study of Islam Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This Unit encourages individual paper, paper session, and roundtable proposals in all areas of Islamic studies. Successful proposals will reflect theoretical and methodological sophistication and engagement with existing scholarship along with innovative examination of Muslim practices, texts, and material culture in diverse contexts and geographies. We encourage the submission of coherent pre-arranged sessions involving multiple scholars, and these could include roundtable or other creative presentation formats.

As an ongoing and explicit requirement of our Unit, a successful pre-arranged session or panel proposal must incorporate gender diversity. Diversity of race and ethnicity, theoretical method, and rank are also highly encouraged and sought.

If your proposal is accepted and you agree to be on the program, we expect you to show up to participate in your session at the Annual Meeting, barring unforeseeable exceptional circumstances. Please note that the Islamic studies program Units have a policy according to which no-shows may be barred from the program for the following year.

For the 2020 meeting in Boston, we are especially interested in paper and/or panel proposals on:

- engaged scholarship, the role of the Islamic studies, and the study of Islam
- nationalism, politics, and the state
- exhibiting, curating, and archiving Islam
- Transnational, Transregional Muslim histories
- local histories and narratives of Muslims in America
- Engagements with Muslim thought/traditions in dialogue with critical theory, methods, and religious studies broadly.
- As always, we welcome submissions dealing with the Qur'an and the Sunna, law, philosophy, theology, mysticism, ritual, gender and sexuality, modernity and globalization, teaching, religious pluralism, and other areas of general interest. Furthermore, we encourage proposals dealing with Shi'ism within and across these areas.

All proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria: a descriptive title; a clearly formulated argument; engagement with secondary literature; articulation of a contribution to the field; and clearly identified methodology and sources.

Further suggestions for AAR proposal writers can be found in Kecia Ali's "Writing a Successful Annual Meeting Proposal": <https://www.aarweb.org/annual-meeting/writing-successful-annual-meeting-....>

Selected presenters will be notified of their acceptance approximately a month after the PAPERS deadline. Our Unit requires that the full text of their presentation be submitted for pre-circulation among session participants by November 2, 2020.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit is the 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, and the Qur'an Unit.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Bazzano, Elliott, Le Moyne College, bazzanea@lemyne.edu

**Chair** - Morgenstein Fuerst, Ilyse, University of Vermont, ilysermf@gmail.com

## **Study of Judaism Unit**

### **Call Text:**

This Program Unit engages in active conversation with the methodologies common to the study of religion by exploring the historical, social, aesthetic, and political aspects of Jewish religion in its various contexts. All the while, we challenge methodologies in place at the AAR and offer new approaches to the study of religion through our focus on textual studies and the engagement between texts/doctrines and other aspects of religious culture. Second, we wrestle with topics of concern to the community of religious scholars in general, including community and commitment, gender, and the intersection between religion and politics. Finally, we encourage the submission of panels that bring the Study of Judaism into conversation with other units within the AAR.

This Unit welcomes individual paper, papers session, and roundtable proposals from the wide scope of Judaism, Jews, and Jewish studies — from late antiquity to the present. We are always open to considering any proposals, and for 2020, we are particularly interested in the following topics. Pre-arranged session or panel proposals should aim to represent a diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, and academic rank.

- Varieties of Jewish (religious) affect(s)
- Intersectional Jewish identities
- Implications of contemporary environmental, economic, and political crises for Jewish identity, culture, and practice in the United States, Europe, and/or Israel/Palestine
- Judaism and religious studies pedagogy
- Work by graduate students and/or recent PhDs for a session of pre-circulated papers

### **Mission Statement:**

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

First, this Unit engages in active conversation with the methodologies common to the study of religion by exploring the historical, social, aesthetic, and political aspects of Jewish religion in its various contexts. All the while, we challenge methodologies in place at the AAR and offer new approaches to the study of religion through our focus on textual studies and the engagement between texts/doctrines and other aspects of religious culture. Second, we wrestle with topics of concern to the community of religious scholars in general, including community and commitment, gender, and the intersection between religion and politics. Finally, we actively pursue cosponsorship with other AAR Program Units. Recently, we have worked with the Study of Islam Unit, the Mysticism Unit, the Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit, and several

SBL Sections. In the future, we look forward to continuing to work with various AAR — and whenever possible, SBL — Program Units.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Nahme, Paul, Brown University, paul\_nahme@brown.edu

**Chair** - Rabin, Shari, Oberlin College, srabin@oberlin.edu

## Tantric Studies Unit

### Call Text:

We invite papers on the following topics:

- Tantra in the "Me Too" Era

(contact: Christa Kuberry [ckuberry@yogaalliance.org](mailto:ckuberry@yogaalliance.org))

- Yoga and Tantra

(contact: Ben Williams [bwilliams@naropa.edu](mailto:bwilliams@naropa.edu))

- Tantra and Bhakti

(contact: Seth Ligo [sethligo@gmail.com](mailto:sethligo@gmail.com))

- Tantra in Bengal and Assam: Śāktas, Bāuls, Sahajiyās, Yogis and Faqirs

(contact: June McDaniel [McdanielJ@cofc.edu](mailto:McdanielJ@cofc.edu) )

- Gender Performance in Tantra

(contact: Patricia Sauthoff [sauthoff@gmail.com](mailto:sauthoff@gmail.com))

- Tantra and Film

(contact: Rachel McDermott [rmcdermo@barnard.edu](mailto:rmcdermo@barnard.edu))

- Tantra and Ritual Language

(contact: Jackson Stephenson [jbj@ucsb.edu](mailto:jbj@ucsb.edu))

Preformed paper panels are encouraged, and may be structured to fill 2.5-hour or 1.5-hour session meeting times. Individual paper proposals are also sometimes accommodated in the program, though this depends on the availability of timings for paper presentations. Panel or paper proposals may engage any topic or concern, with the above being only some of the possibilities that were proffered at the Tantric Studies Business Meeting during the 2019 AAR National Meeting.

### Mission Statement:

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Bühnemann, Gudrun, University of Wisconsin, [gbuhnema@wisc.edu](mailto:gbuhnema@wisc.edu)

**Chair** - Hayes, Glen, Bloomfield College, [glen\\_hayes@bloomfield.edu](mailto:glen_hayes@bloomfield.edu)

## Teaching Religion Unit

### Call Text:

- A Conversation about Derek Bruff's *Intentional Tech: Principles to Guide the Use of Educational Technology in College Teaching* (WVU Press 2019). Bruff is the director of the Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching, and the publisher notes that Bruff argues that teaching and learning goals should drive instructors' technology use, not the other way around. *Intentional Tech* explores seven research-based principles for matching technology to pedagogy. We invite proposals from persons interested in discussing Bruff's *Intentional Tech* on a moderated small panel. Successful proposals will directly address how specific ideas from the book or elements of it relate to course design and classroom teaching.

### • Teaching after Traumatic Events

The Teaching Religion Unit invites proposals to participate in an exploratory session about teaching in the days after traumatic events, such as natural disasters or campus shootings. Participants in the session will work together to think through how we might assemble resources in the immediate aftermath of events that affect our students and communities. We invite proposals from scholar-teachers with expertise related to teaching in the aftermath of trauma and from colleagues with experience locating useful sources, creating shared resources, or contributing to crowdsourced syllabi when classes are underway, something happens, and an intervention is necessary. We also invite proposals from applicants with experience teaching in situations of ongoing trauma, such as those whose teaching addresses movements like Black Lives Matter or #MeToo to share pedagogical strategies and resources.

### • How to Teach Indigenous Religious Traditions

The African Diaspora Religions, Indigenous Religious Traditions, and Native Traditions in the Americas Unit invites proposals for a cosponsored session. Heeding Linda Tuhiwai Smith's call to center contemporary Indigenous politics, spiritual protocols and authorship within research methodologies, this co-sponsored session will feature papers and demonstrations on teaching Indigenous religious traditions. Presenters will pre-circulate their pedagogical papers prior to the AAR meeting. Their written approach will be in close conversation with contemporary Indigenous methodologies, teachers, activists, writers, and intellectuals. Panelists will speak for five minutes and then briefly demonstrate their approach to applying Indigenous pedagogies within the teaching of specific Indigenous religious traditions.

### • Teaching about Death, Dying, and Beyond

The Death, Dying and Beyond and the Teaching Religion Units invite paper proposals for a cosponsored panel on the teaching of death, dying and beyond. "Death and Dying in World Religions," "Sociology of Death," "Cultures of Death and Dying," or some variation of this undergraduate course usually exists as a general education course or elective in which students learn about how death, dying, and the afterlife are experienced, considered, handled, ritualized, mourned and memorialized, etc. in different religious traditions, cultures, geographies. Many courses, whether housed in religion departments, sociology or philosophy, explore a variety of approaches and methodologies while experimenting with new mediums

and pedagogies. This cosponsored session invites paper proposals broadly on the teaching of death, dying, and beyond both within the university and outside the classroom.

- **Teaching Religions in Africa**

Teaching African religions – in all their diversity – brings its own challenges to the classroom. These challenges relate to the longstanding problem of othering and the history of (mis)representation of African societies and cultures, including their religious beliefs and practices, in the West; the contemporary politicisation of African religious traditions and identities both within Africa and beyond; the intricacies relating to power and positionality in knowledge production, and the limitations of academic categories, concepts and methodologies. This co-sponsored section will feature reflections on, and demonstrations of innovative pedagogical approaches, curriculum design, teaching practices, and textbook resources.

- **Teaching with Technology in the Classroom**

We seek papers or panels devoted to teaching with and/or creating resources for use in the classroom, specifically podcasting, YouTube, virtual reality or augmented reality apps, and popular social media platforms like Pinterest, Twitter, or Instagram.

- **Teaching online**

The Teaching Religion Unit invites proposals on teaching about effective strategies for teaching religions online.

**Mission Statement:**

This 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection. Proposal submissions are closed but as a Chair you may continue to submit proposals.

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Howell, David B., Ferrum College, [dhowell@ferrum.edu](mailto:dhowell@ferrum.edu)

**Chair** - Bassett, Molly, Georgia State University, [mbassett@gsu.edu](mailto:mbassett@gsu.edu)

## Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit

### Call Text:

This year, the committee seeks proposals relating to the following topics:

- Papers that explore the uses and abuses of theology in continental philosophy, including papers that trouble the concept of theology, examine genealogies of the relationship between political theology and continental philosophy, and/or examine what theology might mean in various discourses and frameworks.
- Papers that reflect on the question of whether continental thought can be decolonial from outside the Christian West, including (but not limited to) Asian, Islamic, and African studies.
- Papers that engage with the Marxist concept of real abstraction, especially as developed by Alfred Sohn-Rethel, and its relation to philosophy and theology (potentially engaging figures such as Brenna Bhandar, Alberto Toscano, and Sara-Maria Sorentino).
- Papers that tackle what might be called "classical" problems in the philosophy of religion, such as theodicy, from a Continental perspective but perhaps also exploring more speculative topics such as angelology and demonology.
- Papers that explore theological and/or religious topics in new, under-discussed, or untranslated figures such as François Laruelle, Emmanuel Falque, Simona Forti, Adriana Cavarero, Françoise Dastur, Anne Dufourmantelle, Maria Zambrano, philosophers of science such as Isabelle Stengers and Vincianne Despret, or the Marxist feminist Silvia Federici.
- Papers or panels that think constructively or textually about Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, entering its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020. We at least plan that one session will be a pre-arranged panel on DandG's book and its themes. This session will be co-sponsored by the Reading, Theory and the Bible Unit of SBL and potentially the Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit of AAR.

As always, we also welcome proposals in any area relevant to the intersection of continental thought and theology, broadly construed.

This committee does an initial anonymous review of all panels. However, in accordance with the AAR's broader mission to foster diversity and inclusion, we view the identities of all proposed panelists after the initial review, to ensure diverse representation. We will *not* accept any panel that does not include a woman in a substantive role (i.e., as a presenter or responder, not merely a presider), and we reserve the right to reject proposals that lack diversity in other areas.

### Mission Statement:

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 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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Marovich, Beatrice, Hanover College, beatrice.marovich@gmail.com

**Chair** - Kotsko, Adam, North Central College, akotsko@gmail.com

## **Theology and Religious Reflection Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Death, illness, cancer  
From neoliberalism to the rise of fascism and socialism  
Religion and progressive organizing (e.g. in Hong Kong, Black Lives Matter, the Congo, "they can't kill us all")  
Limit experiences, minoritized religious, or religion-adjacent practices: rave culture, astrology, tarot, etc.  
Religion and disability (especially papers from perspectives outside Christianity)  
The work of Hortense Spillers

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Tonstad, Linn, Yale University, linn.tonstad@yale.edu

**Chair** - Peter-Dass, Rakesh, Hope College, rpeterdass@gmail.com

## Theology of Martin Luther King Jr. Unit

### Call Text:

#### SESSION ONE

Black Hope and Social Imagination in the Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. Unit invites papers that consider hope and social imagination in the philosophical, theological, and ethical thinking of Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as other actors in the broader Civil Rights Movement. We seek papers that engage contemporary questions in the realm of religious studies and African American studies, Black, Black feminist and Womanist studies, as they wrestle with themes such as afro-pessimism and absurdity. How might Kingian thinking help to expand or problematize the discourse on the possibility – or lack thereof – of hope, within a context in which the material evidence suggests that Black Lives don't matter? How can King's rich archives of writings, speeches, and sermons that aid in an illumination of how we might contemplate the function and praxis of hope? Additionally, given the timing of the annual gathering of the American Academy of Religion in 2020, directly following an American Presidential Election, we invite papers on King that take up the theme of social imagination. That is, as we look backwards but glance forward, how does King's social imagination help to narrate the necessity of ethical performance from a theo-political vantage point? How might we think about imagination as an ethics and moral performance in the Civil Rights Movement or King's thought?

[This two-hour session will include our annual business meeting]

#### SESSION TWO

Co-Sponsored Session with the Black Theology Unit

Spirituality, Spiritual Mentoring, and Social Transformation the Life and Thought of Martin Luther King Jr, Coretta Scott King, and Howard Thurman

When Martin Luther King Jr. was a doctoral student at Boston University, Howard Thurman was Dean of Marsh Chapel at BU. Boston was a site that deepened King and Thurman's mentor-student relationship and also served as the site where Martin met Coretta Scott while she studied at the Boston Conservatory. Coretta, at the time a committed feminist and anti-war activist, became King's wife and partner in the struggle for justice. As the AAR returns to Boston, we invite papers that explore the life and thought of Martin Luther King Jr, Coretta Scott King, and Howard Thurman around the themes of spirituality, spiritual mentorship, and social transformation.

### Mission Statement:

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.

**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:**

**Chair** - McKinnis, Leonard, Saint Louis University, [leonard.mckinnis@slu.edu](mailto:leonard.mckinnis@slu.edu)

**Chair** - Lee, Hak Joon, Fuller Theological Seminary, [hjlee@fuller.edu](mailto:hjlee@fuller.edu)

## Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit

### Call Text:

Thank you for your contributions to the Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit!

We welcome proposals on any topic or theme related to Tibetan and Himalayan Religions for next year's American Academy of Religion annual meeting in Boston. The presidential theme for 2020, suggested by our own José Cabezón, is "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild." President Cabezón hopes that this theme will provide the Academy's units with an opportunity to reflect on our own histories and aspirations as a professional society devoted to promoting the academic study of religion. Proposals do not need to relate to this theme but the AAR will be particularly interested in panels that address it.

The Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit has a Tier 2 session allotment for the five-year term (2019-2023). This grants us a choice of either one 2 hour session and two 90 minute sessions or one 2.5 hour session, and one 2 hour session, both with one additional 90-minute session for co-sponsorship. Please indicate in your submissions as clearly as possible the scope of your proposed panel. Consider submitting your individual paper in addition to its inclusion in a fully formed panel, if you would like your individual paper to be included for a possible "new research" session formed out of individual submissions.

Proposals may be submitted through the PAPERS website from January 27, 2020 through March 2, 2020.

We would like to especially welcome under-represented members of the Tibetan and Himalayan Studies global guild to submit papers as individual and/or group submissions. If papers are accepted, the AAR has limited funding (waivers for membership and registration fees) for scholars who do not usually attend the annual meetings. Likewise after papers are accepted, it may be possible to get funding from external sources for underrepresented scholars, please contact the co-chairs, Ben Beguin or Nicole Willock, for more information.

Below are themes that have already been proposed by Unit members (if you are interested in contributing to a panel on one of these topics, please contact the organizer directly):

"Contemporary Anthropological Research"

Contact: Maria Turek, [maria.turek@utoronto.ca](mailto:maria.turek@utoronto.ca)

"What can ethnographic work among Tibetans in the PRC and the diaspora tell us about Tibetan Buddhism today?"

Contact: Nisheeta Jagtiani, [nisheetajagtiani2021@u.northwestern.edu](mailto:nisheetajagtiani2021@u.northwestern.edu)

"Transnational Narratives"

Contact: Bill McGrath ([wam6n@virginia.edu](mailto:wam6n@virginia.edu))

"Transnational and transcultural voices in the assimilation of the Tibetan Buddhist 'Empire'"

This panel or roundtable aims to bring together scholars working in and around "Tibetan/Himalayan Buddhism" across the wider world of Tibetan Buddhism (Nepal, Bhutan, Southern Mongolia, Northern Mongolia, Ladakh) to highlight and explore its cosmopolitan and diverse characteristics during the early modern period.

Contact: Sangseraima Ujeed, [suieed@ucsb.edu](mailto:suieed@ucsb.edu)

### **“Translating ‘Religion’ Out of Tibetan”**

This would be an exploration of how we translate “religion” out of Tibetan Buddhist sources. The term “religion” has long been at the forefront of discourses about Tibet, its culture, and its history. What are the critical terms Tibetan Buddhists have used to describe and define their communities of belonging, and to distinguish them from Buddhist and non-Buddhist others? Where do these terms diverge from the way “religion” is deployed? The panel would aim to engage with works from Tibetan authors at diverse historical periods and scales in thinking about how their terminologies and categories might contribute to scholarly conversations about religion in Tibet and the Himalayas.

Contact: Eric Haynie, University of Michigan, [ehaynie@umich.edu](mailto:ehaynie@umich.edu)

### **“Interspecies Relations in Tibet and the Himalayas”**

In Tibet and the Himalayas, human and non-human animals have traditionally shared domestic space, and have to some extent constituted their aims, emotions, and sensibilities in relation with one another. Webs of relatedness connect humans not only with livestock and domesticated animals, but also with wild animals, with gods and spirits (e.g., sa bdag, yul lha, klu, btsan, and ’dre), and of course with other human beings such as siblings, parents, children, spouses, and in-laws. Looking to how these relations are co-constitutive of human and non-human identities, we draw on Radhika Govindrajan’s ethnography of “interspecies relatedness” and her proposal that “relatedness must always be understood as constituting a partial connection between beings who come to their relationship as unpredictable, unknowable, and unequal entities.” Beyond the quotidian performance of relatedness in the daily lives of, for example, farmers and nomads, religious adepts employ various means to communicate with gods and spirits, and also with dakinis, yidam deities, and protector deities. Attention to the media and the semantics of interspecies communication often reveals the specific contours of relatedness, and that ways in which each party shapes the exchange. This panel proposes to explore modes of communication and how these index various types of relatedness across or between ontological, positional, or special divides. We welcome contributions relevant to human–non-human animal relations, but we equally welcome papers that meditate on relatedness, difference, and interpersonal communication with other beings as well.

Contacts: Brandon Dotson, [bbd12@georgetown.edu](mailto:bbd12@georgetown.edu) and Amelia Hall, [ahall@naropa.edu](mailto:ahall@naropa.edu)

### **Mission Statement:**

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 the last decade, 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Bogin, Benjamin, Skidmore College, [bbogin@skidmore.edu](mailto:bbogin@skidmore.edu)

**Chair** - Willock, Nicole, Old Dominion University, [nwillock@odu.edu](mailto:nwillock@odu.edu)

## **Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Unit seeks papers or a panel proposal regarding 2 Themes:

#### **1. Tillich and the religiously disaffiliated (i.e. "the nones")**

What aspects of Tillich's thought resonate with the religiously disaffiliated? How might Tillich be utilized as a resource in constructing a sense of meaning and purpose in life or sense of spirituality among the religiously disaffiliated? Especially welcome are papers and panels that include religiously disaffiliated students, (undergraduate or graduate) as co-presenters, describing their own experience of encountering Tillich in the classroom, with mentored reflection by their teacher. ("Religiously disaffiliated" includes students who have rejected denominationalism, students who identify as spiritual but not religious, and students who identify as atheist or agnostic).

#### **2. Tillich and Health**

Is health merely the absence of disease? Tillich engaged the idea of health with respect to such diverse topics as the health of the nation and society, mental health, illness, and depth psychology, among others. His engagements with contemporary psychologists and psychotherapists are well-known but perhaps inadequately explored. We invite papers that use Tillich's work and method to engage the topic of health broadly. We are particularly interested in papers that engage the topics of mental health and illness, psychology, and disability.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Unit fosters scholarship and scholarly exchanges which analyze, criticize, and interpret the thought or impact of Paul Tillich (1886–1965) and that use his thought — or use revisions of or reactions against his thought — to deal with contemporary issues in theology, religion, ethics, or the political, social, psychotherapeutic, scientific, or artistic spheres of human culture. We cooperate with the North American Paul Tillich Society (a Related Scholarly Organization of the AAR), which is linked with the German, French, and other Tillich societies. Papers at our sessions are published in the Society's quarterly Bulletin without prejudice to their concurrent publication.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Wagoner, Bryan, Davis and Elkins College, wagonerb@dewv.edu

**Chair** - Stahl, Devan, Baylor University, devanstahl@gmail.com

## **Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity is seeking paper proposals for four sessions

- 1) Middle Eastern Christianity and Others in the City of the Late Antique East (co-sponsored with Middle Eastern Christianity)

The Middle Eastern Christianity and the Traditions of the Late Antiquity East Units invite paper proposals that analyze Middle Eastern Christians in the city. This call is open to broad interpretation, such as: interaction with other religious communities, civic visions, city life, public engagement, civic movements, and any other ways that M.E. Christians have interpreted or engaged the city. The Call for Papers is open to scholarship from all academic fields.

Successful proposals must present a clear thesis, explain the theoretical and methodological approaches of the research, and identify a specific body of evidence that the research will interpret.

- 2) One will be an open session for which papers on any topic germane to the subject area of the Program Unit may be proposed.

3) For the second session, we will be pairing papers on particular themes across religious traditions in the Late Antique East: Time, Space, and Text. Presenters will each offer a ten-minute paper on the theme in one or more religious traditions or texts in the Late Antique East, followed by discussion. To apply, please write a proposal detailing which theme you are interested in presenting on, what religious tradition(s) or text(s) you would like to explore, and what features of the theme you are interested in highlighting. Organizers will pair interlocutors. Proposals may explore Late Antique Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Mandaeism, Manichaeism, eastern Christianities, early Islam, Iranian Buddhism, and/or any other religious traditions in the Late Antique East.

- 4) For the 2020 annual meeting, we are also inviting papers for a special joint session cosponsored by Qur'an Unit and the Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit on Translation, Transmission and Intertextuality. We are for paper proposals that reflect the problems and methodologies encountered by the members of the Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit and the Qur'an Unit while pursuing their research that involves translation, transmission and intertextuality. If you have ideas for a contribution, please correspond with the co-chairs of the two units as soon as possible to help us put together a strong and interesting panel.

### **Mission Statement:**

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 Mandaeism. 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Ronis, Sara, St. Mary's University, TX, sara.ronis@gmail.com

**Chair** - Mokhtarian, Jason, Indiana University, jmokhtar@indiana.edu

## **Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit**

### **Call Text:**

#### Co-sponsored Paper Session with Religion and Cities Unit

We invite proposals that examine the intersections between the study of religion and cities. For a co-sponsored session with the Religion and Cities Unit, we seek papers that focus on teaching religion with a focus and connection to local cities and urban life. How does the study of religion in particular cities challenge and expand traditional academic epistemologies, methods, and boundaries? In what ways do our pedagogical approaches and strategies engage local communities, urban contexts, and the issues that religious communities encounter or address in cities (e.g. gentrification, violence, homelessness/housing crisis, immigration)? How do we design courses that encourage the intersection of theory and practice in the study of religion and cities? What are our goals and aims for scholarship and pedagogies that examine religion and cities?

#### Co-sponsored Panel with Religious Education Association

This collaborative session with the Religious Education Association explores creative pedagogical approaches that instructors of religion use to teach about gender and sexuality, especially in relation to the sensitive subject of trauma from gendered and sexual violence. The panelists, who are seasoned teachers of religion, gender, and sexuality, will share ways that they have created space for both academic learning and healing, helping students to understand the institutional aspects of gender and sexual oppression and violence while also being attentive to the life experiences of students within their classrooms.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**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:**

**Chair** - Stivers, Laura, Dominican University of California, [laura.stivers@dominican.edu](mailto:laura.stivers@dominican.edu)

**Chair** - Fisher, Michael R., Wesley Theological Seminary, [mfisher@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:mfisher@wesleyseminary.edu)

## Vatican II Studies Unit

### Call Text:

#### Session I

##### “Structural Reform for a New Epoch”

The Second Vatican Council sought to reform the church for a world on the threshold of a new era. The social, cultural, technological and environmental changes of the late twentieth century continue their advance on a global scale and at an accelerated pace today. Observing that we are living through a change of epochs, Pope Francis has called for a renewal and reform of structures and practices. We invite critical reflections on need for and efforts to implement structural reform into the life and practice of the Christian community in the present context. Topics might include: synodal processes in church governance; reform of the Roman Curia; increased participation of women and laity; new forms of ministry; pastoral care of divorced and remarried persons; procedures for the investigation of bishops, priests, and pastoral agents in cases of abuse, etc. Priority is given to papers that attend to reforms inspired by the orientations conciliar teaching and respond to the unfinished business of Vatican II.

#### Session II:

##### “Re-Reading Vatican II in a World Church”

Karl Rahner famously interpreted the Second Vatican Council as the coming to consciousness of a “world church.” Since the close of the council the global Catholic population has more than doubled, with two thirds now residing in the global south. With an increasing contextualization and indigenization of Christianity, scholars now observe a differentiation in the reception and interpretation of many of the orientations of Vatican II. Until now, standard reference works on Vatican II have reflected largely Euro-centric views. To address this lacuna and to provide a point of reference for the next generation of scholars, an intercontinental group of scholars has mobilized to develop a new commentary on the documents of Vatican II and their reception history. This session invites only contributions from program participants concerning the effort to develop methodologies for a post-colonial hermeneutic in the interpretation of the documents of Vatican II and their reception history.

### Mission Statement:

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 wider-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 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 (2018-2022) 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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Clifford, Catherine E., Saint Paul University, [cclifford@ustpaul.ca](mailto:cclifford@ustpaul.ca)

**Chair** - Colberg, Kristin, St. Johnand#039;s University/College of St. Benedict, [kcolberg@csbsju.edu](mailto:kcolberg@csbsju.edu)

## **Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

LGBTQ+ Experience as an Ecclesial Issue (Co-Sponsored Session with the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit and the Queer Studies Unit)

The reality of LGBTQ+ experience is a complex phenomenon among churches on local, regional, national, and global levels, within Methodist and Wesleyan communities as well as other denominations and church families. That complexity has impacted the pastoral reality of churches and their self-understanding on all these levels. We invite papers that consider how LGBTQ+ people and their experiences impact churches' experiences and ecclesiologies, particularly in Wesleyan and holiness traditions but also in other churches and traditions. How are LGBTQ+ Christians changing the way we think about the church? How are LGBTQ+ experiences challenging local churches, denominational bodies, and ecumenical relationships? When it comes to tensions and even schisms, what are the competing rationales and forms of ethical discernment underlying opposing visions? What are the differing hermeneutical, historical, narrative, scriptural, traditional, social, and cultural dimensions at work? Are divisions inevitable or are new forms of understanding yet possible? In what ways have LGBTQ+ Christians functioned as a gift, an opportunity, or a challenge to envision or understand the church? What resources in Methodist and Wesleyan theology and ecclesiology, and those of other communities, might assist churches in their responses to LGBTQ+ experiences?

### Theological Education in the Wesleyan/Methodist Traditions

In recognition of the 300th anniversary of John Wesley's matriculation at Oxford, the Unit issues a call for papers on theological education in the Wesley/Methodist traditions. Topics may explore, but are not limited to, the meaning and purpose of theological education; alternative paths to educating clergy and laity; the role of worship and spiritual disciplines in theological education; the significance of social justice in theological education; the influence of monasticism/new monasticism on contemporary efforts to create communities of learning and service; the relationship or tensions between the purposes of seminaries and the mission of the research universities in which they are often housed; the future direction of theological education in global context.

### Wesleyan/Methodist Theology and Social Justice

Wesleyan/Methodist theology, social change, and the fight for justice. Recognizing the work of individuals, such as James Lawson, to move social, ecclesial, and political institutions toward practices of justice, equality, and inclusion, the Unit invites paper proposals that examine the interaction between Wesleyan/Methodist theological traditions and social justice movements across the world. Papers may focus on the work of specific individuals or more broadly on elements within the Wesleyan/Methodist theological traditions from which to draw in opposing all forms of injustice and oppression that rob people of their legal rights and human dignity.

### Women in the Wesley/Methodist Traditions

In concert with the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment's implementation, the Unit issues a call for papers on the roles of women in the Wesleyan and Methodist traditions. Papers may be historical or contemporary in focus. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to, the leadership of Wesleyan/Methodist women in movements for human rights, the leadership of Wesleyan/Methodist women from underrepresented groups, challenges faced by women in the Wesleyan/Methodist traditions, institutions established by Wesleyan/Methodist women, or the contributions of Wesleyan/Methodist female theologians.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Wesley, Cindy K., University of Northern Colorado, cindy.wesley@unco.edu

**Chair** - Colon-Emeric, Edgardo, Duke University, ecolonemeric@div.duke.edu

## **Western Esoterism Unit**

### **Call Text:**

(Western) Esoterism: the Other Religious Studies

The occult revival in Europe emerged contemporaneously with the discipline of Religious Studies, and is not unconnected to it. Occultists often sought the support of scholarly writing even as scholars took an interest in psychic phenomena. Dion Fortune leaned on both Freud and Margaret Murray, Helena Blavatsky took advantage of scholarly writing about gnosticism and esoteric Buddhism, even as E.B. Tylor was attending seances. Occultists like G.R.S. Mead and Arthur Edward Waite were also amateur scholars, leaving an imprint on later research on Gnosticism, Hermetism, alchemy, and Rosicrucianism. This session is designed to investigate the links and cross-references between esoteric and scholarly discourses at the dawn of the academic study of religion.

### Possession and Mediumship in Esoteric Milieux

Possession and mediumship are linked phenomena. Many traditional Catholic assumptions about the phenomenology of possessing spirits were drawn into mesmerism and subsequently into occultism and spiritualism during the nineteenth century. In the same time period, the emergent fields of psychology and psychoanalysis engaged with mediumistic phenomena in different but related ways. While Freud and F.W.H Myers worked out their theories of stratified consciousness, Pierre Janet was working out his theory of "dissociation," showing it as a psychological defense against traumatic experience. The discourses of psychology and esoterism come together, merging and disjoining in many places. This session will look at deliberate esoteric cultivation of possession and mediumistic phenomena, and engage with the historical ontologies that informed these varied ideas of stratified selves alongside ritual productions of possession.

### Who Does Black Magic? Conspiracy Theories and Paranoid Politics

Conspiracy theories have a surprising life of their own, a kind of recombinant DNA of tropes and motifs that frequently link up to esoteric concepts or rituals. A book on flat earth relying on a foundational NASA oriented conspiracy theory may conglomerate with fictions from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Jewish-Freemason conspiracy, Kabbalistic black magic, and suggestions of sexual and cannibalistic ritual by religious or esoteric Others. Conspiracist motifs proliferate despite their repeated debunking, and continue to travel the circuit of both political and religious groups worldwide in a bewildering variety of shifting forms, notoriously hard to counter with any ordinary facts, pedagogies, or debate strategies. This session is intended to foster discussion about suspicion of esoteric involvement in political or religious conspiracies.

Co sponsored with SBL Gnosticism, Esoterism and Mysticism in Antiquity

Authors-meet-critics: Dylan M. Burns, Almut-Barbara Renger, eds.. *New Antiquities:*

*Transformations of Ancient Religion in the New Age and Beyond.* Equinox, 2019.

This edited collection offers a variety of perspectives on how individuals and groups appeal to, reconceptualize, and reinvent the religious world of the ancient Mediterranean to legitimize developments in contemporary religious culture. We seek proposals from scholars in related fields who wish to respond to, engage with, or offer a critique of the book as a whole or to specific chapters. Papers engaging themes of the impact of scholarship on religious life and development of NRMs especially welcome. The editors have been invited to respond.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit seeks to reflect and further stimulate the current process — reflected in the recent creation of new teaching programs, international associations, journals, book series, and reference works — of professionalization and scholarly recognition of Western esotericism as a new area of research in the study of religion. For more information on the field, see the websites of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE, <http://www.esswe.org>), the Association for the Study of Esotericism (ASE, <http://www.aseweb.org>), and the Center for the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam (<http://amsterdamhermetica.nl>). Information about the academic journal Aries and the Aries Book Series can be found on the website of Brill Academic Publishers (<http://www.brill.com/aries>; and <http://www.brill.com/publications/aries-book-series>).

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Fanger, Claire, Rice University, [claire@celestiscuria.org](mailto:claire@celestiscuria.org)

**Chair** - Asprem, Egil, Stockholm University, [egil.asprem@rel.su.se](mailto:egil.asprem@rel.su.se)

## **Wildcard Session**

### **Call Text:**

Wildcard sessions are intended to be experimental, creative, or exploratory sessions that address an area of interest that does not naturally fall within the purview of an existing Program Unit. These sessions offer members direct access to the Annual Meeting program outside of the normal Program Unit structure.

Guidelines for Wildcard sessions:

- Wildcard sessions are accepted through PAPERS only.
- Wildcard sessions must use one of the prearranged session proposal formats (papers session or roundtable).
- Make sure the wildcard 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 as a Wildcard session and also to another Program Unit, it will be eliminated from consideration as a Wildcard.

The Program Committee evaluates all Wildcard Session proposals. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by April 1, 2020.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Bauman, Whitney, Florida International University, [whitneyabauman@mac.com](mailto:whitneyabauman@mac.com)

**Chair** - Puckett, Robert N., American Academy of Religion, [rpuckett@aarweb.org](mailto:rpuckett@aarweb.org)

## Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit

### Call Text:

*Celebrating 30 Years of Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society: Womanist Retrospective in Print*

When novelist Alice Walker defined the term “womanist” in *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983), Black women religious scholars and activists adopted Walker’s four-part framing as a birthing ground to cultivate a theo-ethical vision toward survival and liberation of Black women and wholeness for all humanity. Black liberation theology, in its initial emergence in the 1960s and 70s, even with a quest for liberation of an oppressed African American people, failed to address issues concerning gender. While feminist theology rallied against patriarchy and domineering forces threatening middle-class white women’s experiences, some feminists ignored the complex identities of women of color, particularly at the intersections of race and class. With full recognition that Black and feminist theologies did not address their total concerns, Black women religious scholars and activists searched for new language and paradigms to help them give voice to the lived experiences of African diasporan women. They found a critical solution in the term “womanist,” and approached the American Academy of Religion to launch Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society in 1990. During the 2020 Annual Session, we honor our legacy with an invited panel celebrating and reflecting on seminal published works, including *White Woman’s Christ, Black Woman’s Jesus*, by Jacquelyn Grant; *A Troubling in My Soul*, edited by Emilie Townes; and *Katie’s Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community*, by Katie Geneva Cannon.

*Religion, Race, and the Embodied Health and Well-being of Black Women: Bioethics from Womanist Perspectives*

CO-SPONSORED with the Bioethics and Religion Unit and Religion and the Social Sciences Unit

From their arrival in the New World, the bodies of African diasporan women have been an embattled space of abuse, disrespect, and egregious experimentation often perpetrated by socio-economics, from colonial enslavement through contemporary mass incarceration; giving birth in the fields and working moments later, with infants ripped from their hands and simultaneously forced to be wet nurses for white babies. Such behavior, steeped in exploitative economics that totally disregarded black women’s personhood had a significant impact on moral, ethical, legal, medical, religious, sociopolitical, scientific, and sociological systems in the United States. The impact on African American women’s embodied lives is vast, from issues of physical and mental health; reproductive justice (forced hysterectomies, sterilization, maternal and infant mortality) to stigmatized health care, biased health and health care policies, technology, body enhancement; environmental injustice, to inequitable health, regardless of class including lesser access to health care, and health insurance. Much conversation is emerging around the intersectionalities of Black women’s lived experiences, and our scholarship, including topics of interests and methodologies. This session invites papers addressing any of these topics and areas related to all aspects of Black women’s embodied

health. Social scientific theories and methods in religious studies and applied ethics are welcome.

*In the Spirit of Harriet: Visions of Womanist Theory and Praxis, the Next 30 Years*

“Traditionally capable, as in: ‘Mama, I’m walking to Canada and I’m taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me.’ Reply: ‘It wouldn’t be the first time.’” ~ Alice Walker. Womanist thought and praxis over the last 30 years continues to evolve within disciplines of American Academy of Religion while embracing interreligious expressions and developing a global presence, from Brazil to the Netherlands and beyond. Engaging the four-fold definition of womanist, scholars, activists, liturgical and healing practitioners have found a home within this paradigm that embraces stepping beyond one’s societally designated space, being in charge; loves women, loves men sexually and/or nonsexually; honors women’s culture; loves life, nature, Spirit, food, roundness, the folk, and herself, regardless; and, womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender. With such a rich legacy, of past and present, we invite papers from all disciplines and lived experiences to imagine where womanist thought and praxis will land in the next 30 years. Topics foregrounding womanism within this session may include but are not limited to: queer perspectives; Afrofuturism; rhetorics and meaning-making strategies; proclamation; mysticism; health strategies and healing; millennials; Black women navigating multiple religious traditions; Ecowomanism; and Hood womanism (i.e. womanism that engages urban communities).

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides a forum for religious scholarship that engages theoretically and methodologically the four-part definition of a Womanist as coined 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.

**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

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A., Shaw University, cduggan@shawu.edu

**Chair** - Jones, Melanie, Union Presbyterian Seminary, melaniechantejones@gmail.com

## **Women and Religion Unit**

### **Call Text:**

As one of the oldest and largest units, we operate with a broad mandate to explore “Women and Religion.” In crafting our call, we intentionally create wide possibilities in order to invite individual papers and panel proposals from a variety of religious and cultural traditions, local and transnational contexts, methodologies and areas of research. We encourage the use of alternate and accessible presentation formats.

We are particularly interested in proposals related to one of the following themes:

#### **1. Women, Genocide, and Native Peoples**

For a Possible quad-sponsorship with the Native Traditions of the Americas Unit, the Women and Religion Unit, the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit, and the North American Religions Unit, we invite proposals that interrogate the role of both religious history and myth in producing and sustaining Indigenous erasure and genocide. We particularly encourage proposals that consider history and myth of the Mayflower, including commemorations like Mayflower 400, in relation to the destruction of the Native Wampanoag Peoples, and the disruption of the Wampanoag matrilineal line. We also invite proposals that further explore the impact of settler colonialism in and beyond the United States, especially those that analyze religion in relation to the genocide of indigenous peoples from a critical gender studies perspective in the North American context, including North America in relation to other contexts affected by European settler colonialism (i.e., Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Islands). Proposals that interrogate the widespread killings and disappearance of indigenous women and girls as a form of genocide (e.g., the June 2019 *Canadian National Inquiry*) are also welcome.

**2. The Women and Religion Unit and the Sikh Studies Unit are seeking papers for a possible co-sponsored session.** The co-sponsored session seeks papers that critically engage with diasporic, postcolonial, and transnational theories and/or methodological approaches relating to feminism, women, and gender in religion. We particularly encourage proposals that address i) women’s agency, and the lack thereof, in religious scripture, institutions, and devotional praxis, and ii) social and cultural practices and their discursive frameworks relating feminist and gendered approaches to women. We encourage papers that build on the recent and emerging body of scholarship in the proposers specific subfield(s) and investigate how feminist knowledge production within and across religious traditions have the potential to subvert and transform hegemonic notions of power including the symbolic, linguistic, political, communal, and interpersonal. What would it look like to reorient our religious institutions, praxis, and identity through a feminist lens that advocates more egalitarian ways of knowing and being?

#### **3. Women, Religion, and the Environment**

In an era of climate change and environmental uncertainty, we invite proposals on women, religion, and the environment. We welcome the proposals that analyze the impact of climate change through the critical lens of gender intersected with race, class, and sexuality (i.e., ecofeminism, ecowomanism, and environmental racism). How does environmental deterioration disproportionately impact women across the globe? We are also interested in the

proposals that engage in women's religious, theological, and spiritual resources to challenge and change political-economic policies for environmental justice and women's environmental activism. What alternative visions for ecological justice do women bring?

#### 4. Women, Religion, and the Formation of Gender Identity.

Religion is a source of the formation of individual, communal, social, and cultural identities. We invite proposals that critically study how religion shapes the formation of gender identities through text, law, practices, culture, and more. What role would intergenerational dialogues play in the formation of identities positively, negatively, and ambiguously? These questions can be interrogated historically and contextually. The proposals that engage critical gender theories, intersectional feminist theories, and theories of religion are welcome.

#### 5. Gender, Religion, and Technology.

In today's world of technology, digital tools and social media are used to advocate for women's rights in their respective religious communities, spread women's perspectives on religion, and to create a virtual community of women. At the same time, these same tools and media have been used to spread hate and forms of gender-based and religious-based violence (eg. sexting, mass shootings). What are the varied impacts of the power of digital tools and social media on women, gender, and religion? What changes will digital tools and social media bring to women's lives in religious communities beyond national borders?

#### 6. Women's Mass Protests

It has been almost a decade since the Arab Spring sparked many forms of mass movements across the globe. We invite paper proposals that study women's and LGBTQs' mass movements for social changes. What role does religion and spirituality play in popular movements led by women and sexually minoritized populations? What alternative knowledge of social change, solidarity, and/or religion/spirituality do these mass movements offer? Those who study social movements intersected with gender, sexuality, and religion in particular contexts across the globe (e.g., Arab Spring, Women's March in D.C., Hong Kong Protest, Popular Resistance in Palestine, etc.) are encouraged to submit their proposals.

#### 7. In response to the President's theme to reflect on our history and our future as scholars of religion, we invite papers that explore the category "women" and how this has changed in religious studies, the larger academy, and women's solidarity movements. The category of women can be interpreted and exercised in various ways such as women's intergenerational dialogue, women's interfaith dialogue, third world women, transgendered women, womanists, feminists, Latinx, etc.

#### 8. Women, Violence, Trauma, and Healing.

For decades, scholarship on women and religion have explored various kinds of gender-based violence. As we continue to wrestle with this ongoing reality, what strategies, practices, and possibilities exist to move towards healing? How does the culture of violence, anger, and trauma manifest itself? How do religious communities analyze and respond to gender-based violence? What theories and practices of healing for victims of gender-based violence do religious communities offer? How do or should religious communities try to heal when gender-based violence happens within them?

9. Juliane Hammer's *Peaceful Families: American Muslim Efforts against Domestic Violence* (Princeton University, 2019).

The author-meets-critics session: Proposals that engage Hammer's new book will be selected to organize a book panel. Hammer will respond to panelists.

#### Possible Pre-Arranged Sessions

##### 1. Religion and Presidential Election

The Unit is also exploring the possibility of a roundtable discussion among panelists invited by a diverse group of units to respond to the 2020 US election. [Persons interested in being considered for this panel should contact the Unit's co-chairs.]

##### 2. Women Leaders

In response to the AAR Presidential Theme (looking back on AAR), the Women and Religion Unit will organize a panel of women who were the first in their role as leaders in the academy and in higher religious education. The interracial and intergenerational panel will consist of the first co-chairs of the Unit, the women of color presidents of AAR, women presidents of seminaries and divinity schools, and emerging women leaders in higher education. The panel will reflect on their experiences and discuss the future of women's leadership in the AAR, higher education in religion, and religious organizations.

#### Mission Statement:

This Unit seeks to promote inclusivity and excellence in scholarship. We have been intentional about including participants and presenters from interdisciplinary approaches and we encourage nontraditional ways of sharing scholarly work on women in religion. In the process of making selections for Annual Meeting sessions, we work collaboratively with other program units 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, gender and religion can be advanced.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

#### Method of submission:

PAPERS

#### Leadership:

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

**Chair** - May, Stephanie, First Parish in Wayland, stepmay@gmail.com

## **Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit**

### **Call Text:**

*As we anticipate our time in Boston, our annual meeting will take place shortly after the 2020 presidential election in the United States. We invite submissions related to the election around the following themes:*

In light of an anticipated yet unknown future, we invite papers that explore strategies for flourishing that women of color Scholars/Teachers/Activists might employ in times of flourishing or times of oppression. Might joy be such a strategy? How does one cultivate joy as a means of resistance and without dependence on external system(s) to receive/maintain that joy? What does joy look like in scholarship; in teaching; in activism? How do we understand joy as a site of power? What does it mean for women of color to be bearers of joy that is just for our flourishing? Considerations might include: joy as resistance, joy as pedagogical tool, joy as justice affiliated, and joy as intellectual catalyst.

Responding to the election as scholars/activists/teachers – how do we as women of color hold the guild and our communities to account? What does it mean to recognize the centers of power that we actually have as opposed to those where our access is managed or controlled by others? As women of color scholars, what are our responsibilities to name and steward our centers of power for the common good? Pedagogically, what does it mean to "teach the election" given people's various categories of vulnerability (presenting a particular gender, being from an ethnically marginalized community, being affiliated with a particular religious tradition, etc)?

*Inspired by this year's Presidential Theme, "The AAR as a Scholarly Guild," we invite submissions around the following themes:*

Decolonizing our fields as women of color scholars: How do we define our collective work and collaborative strategies for ourselves? Additionally, how might we unpack the notion of being "of color?" How does one relate to the notion of color given the impact of whiteness upon or its working within respective communities?

What are the responsibilities of women of color scholars, teachers, and activists for creating/fostering spaces within the guild for trans and non-binary persons of color to flourish?

*Finally, we invite submissions around themes:*

How do women of color share, collaborate, and invite each other into, shared practices of spirituality and activism? How do women of color author/create their own spaces of "belonging?" What strategies might women of color employ that facilitate wellness and longevity of body, mind and spirit and allow for continued work for justice and the interdependent flourishing of communities, individuals and eco-systems?

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Krishnamurti, Sailaja, Saint Maryand#039;s University, sailaja.krishnamurti@smu.ca

**Chair** - Rogers, Deborah, Lane College, drogers@lanecollege.edu

## **World Christianity Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The World Christianity Program Unit invites proposals on the following topics:

Proposals addressing matters of World Christianity and the environment, including issues of displacement, economic inequality, poverty, power, and youth activism.

Proposals featuring the decolonizing of World Christianity, including through the lenses of pedagogy, research ethics, or socio-political engagement.

Proposals that explore the implications of various forms of transnational migration (internal, external, transient, permanent, economic, refugee, asylum seeking, etc.) and the ways in which they have impacted World Christianity.

Proposals that critically evaluate how transnational digital networks, social media, and other online networks are reshaping Christianity around the world beyond its traditional Eurocentric structures and orientations.

Proposals exploring the interaction between indigenous religions and indigenous Christianities (for a possible co-sponsored session with the Comparative Studies in Religion Unit). How have Christians across time and space “indigenized” Christian practices, interpreting Christianity in light of indigenous religions? What sort of cultural or religious logics might determine which parts of indigenous religions—and/or which parts of a given strand of Christianity—are retained, modified, or abandoned? Such questions are non-exhaustive, and this session welcomes any paper that reflects comparatively (and critically) on the relationship between indigenous religions and indigenized Christianities. Contact: Thomas Seat ([thomas.seat@ptsem.edu](mailto:thomas.seat@ptsem.edu)).

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**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

As a rule, proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection. Exceptions include special sessions, e.g. author-meets-critics sessions and some co-sponsored panels.

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Wong, Briana, Princeton Theological Seminary, [briana.wong@ptsem.edu](mailto:briana.wong@ptsem.edu)

**Chair** - Williams, Corey, Leiden University, [c.l.williams@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:c.l.williams@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

## **Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit**

### **Call Text:**

Yoga and Nationalism, Christopher Miller, [chpmiller@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chpmiller@ucdavis.edu)

Yoga in Discipling, Matteo Di Placido, [m.diplacido@campus.unimib.it](mailto:m.diplacido@campus.unimib.it)

Non Indian Physical Yoga (Textual Focus), Naomi Worth, [nw3ca@virginia.edu](mailto:nw3ca@virginia.edu)

Yoga in Politics (Caste), Himanee Gupta-Carlson, [himanee.gupta-carlson@esc.edu](mailto:himanee.gupta-carlson@esc.edu)

Ethics in Contemporary Yoga, Christa Christa Kuberry, [christaschwind@gmail.com](mailto:christaschwind@gmail.com)

Yoga as/and Ritual, Seth D. Powell, [sethpowell@g.harvard.edu](mailto:sethpowell@g.harvard.edu)

Co-sponsored session with the Cognitive Science of Religion Unit and the Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit. In recent years there has been increasing interest in the study of yoga using ideas and methods from cognitive science and neuroscience. This panel aims to bring together scholars of both yoga and cognitive science/neuroscience to gauge the current state of the field.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Foxen, Anya, California Polytechnic State University, [afoxen@calpoly.edu](mailto:afoxen@calpoly.edu)

**Chair** - Borkataky-Varma, Sravana, University of North Carolina, Wilmington,  
[borkatakyvarmas@uncw.edu](mailto:borkatakyvarmas@uncw.edu)

## **Yogācāra Studies Unit**

### **Call Text:**

The Yogācāra Studies Unit section welcomes proposals for papers sessions, individual papers, and roundtables. These sessions might focus on a classical text, on specific topics or themes, on methodological issues, or on recent publications in the field (books, papers, etc.). The allocation of sessions for the Yogācāra Studies Unit is either A) One 2.5 hour session and one 90 minute session or B) Three 90 minute sessions, two of which are co-sponsored sessions. The choice of which option to use will be dictated by the number and types of panel proposals received.

At this year's Business Meeting, a number of proposals were put forward. We welcome submissions for these panels, as well as proposals on other topics of interest to scholars of Yogācāra thought.

#### **1) Text Panel: "Yogācāra in Dharmakīrti: Pramāṇavārttika 3.194–224"**

The Yogācāra Studies Unit generally dedicates one panel to the discussion of a primary text, which should be conducted according to the following guidelines: preferably, the text should be extant in Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan, and there should also be a translation, even a partial one, into English. The panel organizer should propose a specific passage from the text for panelists and attendees to read together and focus on. This passage should be made available to our membership at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. During the session, which will be either a 90 min or 2.5 hours long, speakers should be ready for brief presentations – not more than 7 minutes long – aimed at raising questions and points for the discussion. The remaining time will be dedicated for a close reading of the text section by the group and discussion. This year's text panel proposes to ground our discussion of Yogācāra in Dharmakīrti's thought on John Dunne's translation of Pramāṇavārttika 3.194–224 in the appendix to *Foundations of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2004), 396–411, and the Sanskrit text on which it is based (see Dunne's references). Rather than presenting formal papers, panelists are invited to make exploratory remarks about different portions of the text for approximately seven minutes each, leaving the majority of the time for a detailed discussion of the passage with the audience. Interested panelists should send a short proposal to David Tomlinson at [david.tomlinson@villanova.edu](mailto:david.tomlinson@villanova.edu).

#### **2) Yogācāra and Pratyabhijñā**

This panel seeks to build on recent scholarship that has already noted the extensive influence of Yogācāra thought on Pratyabhijñā. We're particularly interested in work that addresses 1) how ultimate truth can or cannot be expressed using language; 2) how Pratyabhijñā positions relate to disagreements or divergences within different strands of Yogācāra traditions; and 3) the extent to which shared or specific tantric practices shed light on the relationship between Pratyabhijñā and Yogācāra. Interested participants should send a short statement to Cat Prueitt at [catherine.prueitt@ubc.ca](mailto:catherine.prueitt@ubc.ca).

#### **3) Yogācāra as Idealism?: The State of the Debate and New Avenues of Inquiry**

The past few decades have seen strong disagreement among scholars of Buddhist philosophy about whether or not it is right to think of the important Yogācāra theory of "mind only" as a form of "idealism" and, if so, what kind of idealism it is. This debate has given way in more

recent years to an increased focus in the field on more specialized topics, with new monographs published that pay attention to particular figures (e.g. Vasubandhu, Sthiramati) or particular concepts or themes (e.g. the three natures theory, the concept of pure subsequent mundane awareness). This panel seeks to revive the question of Yogācāra as idealism, but to do so in a manner that is informed by the most current scholarship on particular Yogācāra texts, thinkers and ideas. Panelists are invited to submit proposals that directly address the question of Yogācāra as idealism, and that ground their consideration of this question in a particular figure, text, or concept from within the field of Yogācāra. Those interested in participating in the panel should send a short proposal to Joy Brennan at [brennanj@kenyon.edu](mailto:brennanj@kenyon.edu) or Roy Tzohar at [roy.tzohar@gmail.com](mailto:roy.tzohar@gmail.com).

**4) Conceptions of Time: Yogācāra and Cross-sectarian**

Those interested in participating in the panel should send a short proposal to Roy Tzohar at [roy.tzohar@gmail.com](mailto:roy.tzohar@gmail.com).

**5) Yogācāra and Vedānta in Classical India**

Those interested in participating in the panel should send a short proposal to Jay Garfield at [jgarfield@smith.edu](mailto:jgarfield@smith.edu).

**6) Spontaneous Thought as Mental Chatter: Does Thought Involve Mental Chatter?**

Those interested in participating in the panel should send a short proposal to Sonam Kachru at [sk3hp@virginia.edu](mailto:sk3hp@virginia.edu).

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Tzohar, Roy, Tel-Aviv University, roytzo@post.tau.ac.il

**Chair** - Brennan, Joy, Kenyon College, brennanj@kenyon.edu

## **Artificial Intelligence and Religion Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

Scholars of religion and theology add a crucial voice to the ethics of artificial intelligence. We seek papers that address ethical questions associated with artificial intelligence and religion. What should be the ethical limits and concerns of an artificial intelligence both now and in the future? What can religion offer to the construction of an artificial intelligence ethics? What contribution can Religious Studies make to the issue of A.I. Safety? What pitfalls might religion expose? How can A.I. be an ally or enemy in the realms of healthcare, eco-justice, social justice, or authoritarianism? Likewise, given that A.I. might impact specific populations differently, what might religious studies have to say about the ethics of AI from a racialized, gendered, sexed, and/or a differently abled perspective? We welcome original papers that pose new questions.

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

Please note that this paper uses the AAR full-papers program, in which paper are made available before the meeting. Accepted proposers should expect to produce article length papers (4000-7000 words) that will be due by mid October 2020.

### **Mission Statement:**

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is a topic with widespread cultural impact. It is likewise becoming increasingly relevant to religion. Several attempts at using A.I. to understand biblical texts or to model religious practices have yielded fascinating results. But A. I. increasingly is becoming part of the lives of religious people from home A.I. devices, to the application of A.I. by religious groups and organizations, to the prospect of a future superintelligent A.I. that may pose existential threats to humanity or provide solutions to seemingly insoluble problems. Artificial Intelligence is a topic that will increasingly impact religion and religious people as well as individuals who find spirituality in places that are intersecting with digitalization, including popular culture sites such as sport, and music. Changes may be coming from widespread unemployment to the virtual elimination of death itself. These are issues within the purview of Religious Studies and Theology that require systematic analysis.

This the seminar deals with the application and analysis of Narrow A.I. as well as the potential of General A.I. We seek scholars interested in experimental applications of artificial intelligence to religious studies and theology as well as the analysis of current and future implications of A.I. for religion and spirituality. This Unit is a resource for engaging the importance and relevance of A.I. as it intersects with religion, theology, and spirituality. We seek to contribute to the larger cultural and multidisciplinary discussion about these issues as A.I. develops.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Trothen, Tracy J., Queenand#039;s University, Kingston, trothent@queensu.ca

**Chair** - Reed, Randy, Appalachian State University, [reedrw@appstate.edu](mailto:reedrw@appstate.edu)

## Buddhist Pedagogy Seminar

### Call Text:

Our seminar welcomes papers on any aspect of pedagogy for teaching Buddhism. In our second year, we plan to have one session for regular paper presentations and one session for roundtable discussion.

The paper session will focus on investigating how our choice of textbooks influences the way we present historical complexity and contemporary diversity to our students. We invite scholars who are currently teaching Buddhism or related subjects to share their current research and teaching insights about the offering of textbooks on Buddhism. In addition, we also welcome paper proposals that examine but are not limited to these topics: syllabus design, Buddhism and film or popular culture, decolonizing pedagogies based on non-Western voices, teaching Buddhism along with other religions in a survey course in higher education, application of pedagogies in a Buddhist studies classroom, pedagogy in contemporary Buddhist monasteries, and teaching Buddhism in K-12. Please send your paper proposal through AAR's Papers System.

The roundtable discussion aims to offer a platform that scholars can use to exchange critical reflections on teaching Buddhism in higher education. Each presenter will have approximately ten minutes to present a specific assignment, assessment method, class activity, or other strategies that help students understand Buddhism. Please send your proposal in 350 words to Gloria Chien at [chien@gonzaga.edu](mailto:chien@gonzaga.edu). Label your file as RoundtableFirstnameLastname, such as RoundtableGloriaChien.

### Mission Statement:

The mission of the Buddhist Pedagogy Seminar is to promote critical reflection on how our teaching and presentation of Buddhism enhances understanding of Buddhist traditions, practices, and values. Our seminar will facilitate discussion and support research about pedagogically effective approaches to teaching Buddhism. We will focus on a variety of pedagogical challenges within the field over the course of five years, including but not limited to, the religious or secularized use of Buddhist meditation practices in everyday life, modern public understanding of Buddhism shaped through current events, hotly debated ethical issues, and scholarship about teaching Buddhism.

This seminar invites discussion about teaching Buddhism in today's classroom, how Buddhism has been taught historically, how different media about Buddhism can supplement classroom instruction, and how insights from Buddhist traditions can enrich pedagogy in other fields.

Although we envision the seminar appealing primarily to those in Buddhist Studies, we believe it will be beneficial for instructors and scholars outside of the field who teach about Buddhism in their courses.

We are committed to supporting important work in the nascent field of Buddhist pedagogy. Our goal is to grow this field and provide it with a robust arena in which scholars engage in dynamic conversations.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Huynh, Trung, University of Houston, [thuynh32@uh.edu](mailto:thuynh32@uh.edu)

**Chair** - Chien, Gloria I-Ling, Gonzaga University, [chien@gonzaga.edu](mailto:chien@gonzaga.edu)

## **Constructive Muslim Thought and Engaged Scholarship Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

The Constructive Muslim Thought and Engaged Scholarship Seminar is soliciting proposals for the 2020 AAR Annual Meeting that address the methodologies, parameters, and trajectories in contemporary efforts in producing constructive and engaged Muslim scholarship. The theme for the inaugural year of the seminar is to provide a critical assessment of current “state of field.” Proposed papers, then, ought to be framed accordingly around this theme. Papers examining critical forms of constructive Muslim thought and engage scholarship from the disciplinary perspectives of theology, ethics, philosophy, hermeneutics are welcome as are other approaches and areas of inquiry. In particular, we are interested in papers that:

- critically examine the history of constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship in the contemporary period, both within and outside the Euro-American Academy;
- survey and assess the systematic, structural, and institutional challenges facing constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship;
- engage, critique, and/or delineate the perceived boundaries and parameters of constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship as a discipline;
- propose, develop, and/or analyze new methodological approaches to constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship;

Given the format of the seminar, only individually submitted paper proposals are appropriate for consideration. Please do not submit pre-arranged panels.

If your proposal is accepted and you agree to be a part of the seminar, you are expected to attend and participate in the seminar at the Annual Meeting, barring unforeseeable exceptional circumstances. Upon acceptance, seminar participants will be placed in contact with one author to develop a public-facing bibliography of constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship (to be published online) that draws upon their individual areas of research. Moreover, participants are expected to complete and submit their papers at least two months in advance so that their papers can be pre-circulated among interested seminar attendees. Please note that papers will not be delivered at the seminar. Instead, seminar presenters and attendees will be assumed to have read the papers in advance and should arrive ready to discuss the substance of each paper and the thematic connections and tensions that emerge between them.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:**

Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of Submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair – Nguyen, Martin, Fairfield University, alakhira@gmail.com**

**Chair – Syeed, Najeeba, Chicago Theological Seminary, nsyeed@cst.edu**

## **Contextualizing the Catholic Sexual Abuse Crisis Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

For the second year of the seminar, we seek proposals that engage Catholic sexual abuse as it intersects with race, class, and/or colonization.

The annual meeting is in Boston, where almost 20 years ago the *Globe's Spotlight* team foregrounded the classed dimensions of the scandal. And yet, over the past two decades, both public and academic writing has effectively pushed race and class to the periphery of our analyses of religion and sex abuse. This trend is all the more troubling because, in the United States, clergy abuse occurred at the highest rates in Catholic institutions for Native populations, yet the majority of attention has centered around white survivors.

This year's goal is thus to examine the abuse "crisis" within the context of broader systems of power. *How do the historical dimensions of Roman Catholic sexual abuse - as well as social, political, theological, and ecclesial proposals to address the crisis - look different when race, class, and colonialization are centered alongside religion as the structural dimensions of the crisis?*

Proposals may be oriented around historical, ethical, ethnographic, political, legal, theological, sociological, or theoretical questions. We are especially interested in proposals that center black, Native American, or migrant experiences of the crisis, as well as other research that presses us towards new anti-racist, anti-colonialist, feminist, or queer directions.

We welcome proposals not only from scholars *currently* studying these topics, but also from survivor advocates, teachers, journalists, activists, and researchers *who would like to begin new work* on Catholic sexual abuse. Such proposals might suggest a "teach-in" model. Or panelists who want to present preliminary work with an eye towards finding new colleagues or venues for more collaborative, longterm projects on religion and sexual abuse.

### **Mission Statement:**

*Contextualizing the Catholic Sexual Abuse Crisis* is a five-year seminar (2019 - 2023) working towards greater understanding about clergy sexual abuse and the range of questions that it raises.

Attention to clergy abuse must become normative for any treatment of modern Catholicism to not itself be complicit in the abuse and its concealment.

Please note the following guidelines on our values and norms:

- Seminar presenters are required to submit their full papers by the end of September, to be pre-circulated to all attendees via the AAR Papers system. This allows for more conversation and deeper reflection at the conference.
- Proposals should be made with an eye towards publishable work.

- The seminar seeks collaborative and multidisciplinary research, including through historical, ethnographic, theological, legal, political, psychological, and ethical frameworks.
- We are especially interested in proposals that press consideration into new anti-racist, anti-colonial, feminist, or queer directions.
- We encourage methodologies that uplift the voices of survivors, especially victims from African American, indigenous, and non-Anglo parishes.
- Over the full five years of sessions, the seminar will also examine sexual abuse in contexts beyond the Catholic church, both in other religious communities and secular institutions.
- We are committed to supporting research from scholars at all career stages, including doctoral candidates and independent scholars.
- The seminar encourages all of its members to participate in and propose papers to related program units, including Roman Catholic Studies, Religion and Sexuality, Childhood Studies, Ecclesiological Investigations, Religion and Violence, North American Religions, Religion in Europe, and Ethics.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Clites, Brian, Case Western Reserve University, [clitesbr@gmail.com](mailto:clitesbr@gmail.com)

**Chair** - McCabe, Megan, Gonzaga University, [mccabem@gonzaga.edu](mailto:mccabem@gonzaga.edu)

## **Hagiology Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

We invite papers for the inaugural year of our seminar on Hagiology that examine the question of the current state of the field of “hagiographical” studies. Whereas we are interested in challenging the over-determining nature of this Western, Christian signifier, we are intrigued by what direction this area of inquiry is taking and how best to nurture this into its most useful and advantageous form? Our aim as a seminar is to move hagiographical studies in a more comparative and collaborative direction, and we welcome papers that inquire along those lines from their own fields of interest and with materials that they deem “hagiographical” material.

Presenters may begin with the question of: How is the study of hagiology in your own tradition or field emerging, and what tools, categories, taxonomies, and methods are most useful to its studies? In addition, papers should consider how these local details can be interpreted and put in conversation with other fields and traditions. We hope this panel will facilitate a broader conversation about where hagiographical studies is currently situated and signal where it should go.

The session will be exploratory and collaborative in nature, as it seeks to practice a style of conference preparation and presentation that utilizes comparative practices and innovates along those lines.

Presenters will share their papers with fellow panelists prior to the conference date and participate in a few rounds of collaboration with comparative methods. We hope to help presenters be active in creating the best version of their panel by facilitating cross-cultural and interdisciplinary work, while assessing its value as we proceed. We hope the meta discussion of methodology will comprise a portion of the session.

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:**

Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members.

**Method of Submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair – French, Todd, Rollins College, t french@rollins.edu**

**Chair – Siebeking, Brian, Gonzaga University, siebeking@gonzaga.edu**

## **Intersectional Hindu Studies: Feminist and Critical Race Approaches to Research and Teaching Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

There will not be an open call for papers this year; rather, we will be asking invited participants to produce presentations related to our exploration of the topics:

- 1). Exploring Caste Supremacy and the meaning and practices involved in Anti-Caste Activism and Scholarship.
- 2). White Supremacy and how it's influenced the study of Hinduism
- 3). Hindutva's impact on the scholarship and scholars of Hindu studies.

### **Mission Statement:**

This seminar centers the work of racialized researchers and teachers of Hinduism who use critical race theory (CRT) and intersectional feminist theory in our own work, and who are committed to challenging systemic inequality in academic spaces. We have three objectives:

1. To develop an intersectional critique of the formation and institutionalization of Hindu Studies as a field
2. To challenge the prevailing narratives about Hindus and Hindu Studies in the academy and in the global public sphere
3. To create a space for racialized scholars in Hindu Studies (and connected fields) to examine and share our own experiences in academia

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Gandhi, Shreena, Michigan State University, shreenaniketa@gmail.com

**Chair** - Kamath, Harshita Mruthinti, Emory University, harshita.kamath@emory.edu

## **Mahābhārata and Classical Hinduism Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

The Seminar's initial call for papers is intended to explore the state of the field of Mahābhārata studies. We will solicit papers addressing the various approaches employed in previously published works to any part of the Mahābhārata tradition, e.g., Sanskrit or vernacular texts, dramas, and ritual enactments. Papers proposing new avenues of approach or areas in which new research is needed are also welcome. Analysis of the extensive contributions of Alf Hiltebeitel to the understanding of the Sanskrit text and its performative traditions would also be welcome.

### **Mission Statement:**

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?).

### **Anonymity:**

Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** –Dhand, Arti, University of Toronto, arti.dhand@utoronto.ca

**Chair** – Sullivan, Bruce M., Northern Arizona University, bruce.sullivan@nau.edu

## **Navarātri Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

For this year's Navarātri Seminar panel, we are accepting papers on any aspect of Navarātri.

### **Mission Statement:**

This Seminar seeks to study the festival of Navarātri from multiple geographical regions and historical periods and from a variety of methodological and theoretical perspectives. Our seminar seeks to take seriously how enactment and performance during Navarātri meaningfully shapes social worlds for its participants and gives us insights into the dynamicity of religious traditions. Over the course of the five-year seminar, Navarātri will be our extended case study through which questions of religious change, performance, ritual timing, transnational migration, affect, etc. can be investigated.

**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:**

**Chair** - Simmons, Caleb, University of Arizona, cbs852s@gmail.com

**Chair** - Huesken, Ute, Heidelberg University, huesken@uni-heidelberg.de

## **New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous is a five-year seminar dedicated to developing a better theoretical foundation for the study of monsters and the monstrous in the field of religious studies. The second year of our seminar will question the role of monsters in authoritative systems (including but not limited to those systems traditionally approached as religions): What role do monsters serve in explaining misfortune? Are monsters a source of injustice or do they create justice as agents of punishment? How do monsters represent a challenge to or complication of an established order? While these questions have sometimes been framed around discussions of “theodicy,” we explicitly want to push against this Western-oriented term. For example, how do monsters represent, cause, or explain challenges to authoritative conceptions? Can we think about monsters, misfortunate, and (in)justice in new ways that develop greater theological nuance outside of the Euro-American religious imagination? Alternatively, how does the presence of monstrosity in a “non-religious”/“secular” authoritative system suggest content or thought that could be evaluated as religious? We invite papers from any discipline or subfield that either takes on these questions directly or else considers an illuminating case study.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Mission of the New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous Five-Year Seminar is to facilitate dialogue between different areas and methodologies within religious studies to arrive at a better theory of the intersection of religion, monsters, and the monstrous. Due to the diverse nature of our topic, we encourage proposals from any tradition or theoretical perspective. Each year of the seminar will focus on a different theoretical problem as follows:

Year One — Taxonomy. The first task of the seminar will be to explore the taxonomy of “monsters” as a second-order category. What defines a “monster” and what are we talking about when we talk about monsters?

Year Two — Theodicy: What role do monsters serve in explaining misfortune? Are monsters a source of injustice or do they create justice as agents of punishment?

Year Three — Cosmology: How do monsters function to map out reality, including time and space?

Year Four — Monstrification and humanization: When, how, and why are other people and their gods “monstrified?” How does racism intersect with the discourse of the monstrous? Conversely, when, how, and why are monsters humanized?

Year Five — Phenomenology: How should we interpret narratives of encounters with fantastic beings? To what extent are reductionist readings of these narratives appropriate and helpful? Are there viable approaches beyond reductionism?

At the conclusion of the seminar, our findings will be published as an edited volume or otherwise disseminated to the scholarly community.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair – Mikles, Natasha, Texas State University,** n.mikles@txstate.edu

**Chair - Murphy, Kelly, Central Michigan University,** kelly.murphy@cmich.edu

## **Origen and Origen Reception Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

The Origen and Origen Reception Seminar is seeking papers for the 2020 session that explore the theological thought of Origen of Alexandria and its reception. Papers should focus in particular on areas of tension or development within Origen's thought and writings. The seminar also invites papers that explore the reception of Origen's theology in later traditions. Papers that contribute to a nuanced understanding of Origen's sometimes paradoxical theological endeavors and their reception are preferred.

### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Origen and Origen Reception seminar is to foster focused discussion about central themes in Origen's thinking and about the reception thereof. The seminar will include all aspects of Origen's thinking such as theology, philosophy, history, exegesis, and philology. The seminar is particularly interested in the reception of Origen of Alexandria's thinking in various times and places. Each session of the seminar will thus focus on a specific aspect of his thought and its reception in later traditions.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Jacobsen, Anders-Christian, Aarhus University, alj@cas.au.dk

**Chair** - Martens, Peter, Saint Louis University, peter.martens@slu.edu

## **Religion and Families in North America Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

This Group provides an opportunity for scholars of North American Religions to think critically about how the concepts of religion and family are co-constituting terms, asking how religious rhetoric shapes understandings of the family and how families provide a primary context for religious experiences, identities, and rituals. We are seeking papers examining these topics across broad range of family configurations, religious traditions, and historical eras. We are particularly interested in papers that move beyond issues of motherhood to examine other familial relationships such as extended kinship networks, siblings, elder care, singleness in a religious world designed for families, divorce, queer families, and men in familial contexts. We also seeking papers that examine traditions apart from white Christianities, particularly religions of the African diaspora, African American Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Asian American Christian Communities, New Religious Movements, and others. Geographically, we are particularly interested in work from North American outside of the continental US. We are open to all historical periods.

### **Mission Statement:**

The seminar insists on broad definitions of religion and pulls from as diverse a range of families as possible, in order to create generative conversations. To that end, we will think critically about how the concepts of religion and family are co-constituting terms, asking how religious rhetoric shapes understandings of the family and how families provide a primary context for religious experiences, identities, and rituals.

Family, as naturalized term that is anything but natural, is a very generative theme for scholars across the range of theoretical and methodological approaches in the AAR. Geographically, the Seminar is regionally focused on North America to provide a limited scope but intentionally includes Canada, the U.S., Mexico, and the Caribbean, which is to say that we do not see North America as simple a stand in for the United States and intend a transnational and comparative conversation. Methodologically, the Seminar focuses on historical, ethnographic, and cultural studies explorations of family. Theoretically, the Seminar brings together scholars of religion working on questions of kinship, reproduction, gender, race, class, colonialism, ritual and practice, the nation-state, and sexuality in a richly comparative, yet helpfully bounded, conversation. The seminar allows for plenty of opportunity for scholars with very different theoretical orientations toward both the terms “religion” and “family” to find fruitful avenues for dialog between them.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair - Mehta, Samira, Albright College, smehta@albright.edu**

**Chair - Ridgely, Susan, University of Wisconsin, susan.ridgely@wisc.edu**

## **Religion, Attire, and Adornment in North America Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

For 2020, the Religion, Attire, and Adornment Seminar seeks panelists for the following two sessions:

Session 1: We will host a "Dialogue with the Author" session on the book *Religion in Vogue: Christianity and Fashion in America* (NYU, 2019). Author Lynn S. Neal argues that the fashion industry created a distinct Christian aesthetic during the twentieth century, such that religion came to be understood as an extractable commodified accessory; this "fashionable religion" is further emblematic of ways that many modern Christians encounter and perform their religious identity. Any scholar interested in serving as a formal respondent to the book should contact Marie Dallam: [mwdallam@ou.edu](mailto:mwdallam@ou.edu)

Session 2: In an effort to build shared frameworks, ideas, and language for our scholarship, we will host a working group session focusing on method and theory for the study of religion and dress. We seek panelists willing to offer brief critical responses to readings that are significant to this issue in order to generate discussion. Readings will be drawn from dress studies, fashion studies, material/sensory culture studies, and other appropriate scholarship. Scholars interested in being a panelist or otherwise participating should contact Martha Finch: [marthafinch@missouristate.edu](mailto:marthafinch@missouristate.edu)

### **Mission Statement:**

Focusing on the North American context, this seminar explores specific instances of religion, attire, and adornment, as well as theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of religion and dress. Religion and dress includes a wide range of expressions, including not only clothing but all forms of bodily adornment: hairstyle, jewelry, cosmetics, scents, bathing, tattooing, and more. Many religions prescribe and proscribe various forms of dress in both sacred and secular settings, but beyond basic questions of who, what, and why that are prompted by such religious rules, this seminar is especially interested in exploring connections between religious dress and meaning-making. We also seek to move beyond dress as merely a sign or communicator of meaning to attend to the materiality of dress itself, and the ways it shapes bodies and selves. All scholars are invited to contact the chair to express interest in participating in the seminar.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Finch, Martha L, Missouri State University, marthafinch@missouristate.edu

**Chair** - Dallam, Marie W., University of Oklahoma, mwdallam@ou.edu

## **Religions, Borders, and Immigration Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

For AAR 2020 seminar we invite proposals focusing on robust theological and religious engagement with and reflection on memories and histories of forced migration such as crossing various kinds of borders and walls, geographical and cultural, from the perspectives of various religious traditions. In particular, we invite proposals emphasizing constructive engagement with the religious notions of compassion; those with a focus on climate refugees in the context of climate change denial; and theological/religious analyses and critiques of willful ignorance toward the predicaments of refugees and asylum seekers. Attention to interreligious and comparative aspects of such theological/religious engagements will be of particular importance.

### **Mission Statement:**

The overall purpose of this seminar is to promote interreligious and interdisciplinary collaboration on global migration from theological perspectives and how it begins to reshape the interpretations of the Ultimate reality, as it is envisioned in various religious traditions in dialogue with diverse traditions of ethics and pastoral responses to the refugee crisis. This seminar's focus or theme is on the intersection of borders, migration, religious practices and how all of those are being reenvisioned and reinterpreted through dialogical theological reflection in interfaith perspectives. The work of the seminar addresses one of most critical issues of our time, and we believe that religion plays an essential role in understanding the meaning of these changes. This new seminar will continue to encourage different and creative approaches, such as comparative theology and theologies of religious diversity, to explore the meaning of our times.

**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:**

**Chair - Suna-Koro, Kristine, Xavier University, sunakorok@xavier.edu**

**Chair - Ashton, Loyer, Tougaloo College, lashton@tougaloo.edu**

## **Religious Reflections on Friendship Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

The Religious Reflections on Friendship Seminar invites proposals for papers that address the intersection of religion and friendship from any scholarly perspective and religious tradition. We are seeking diverse perspectives on friendship. Papers presented at the seminar will be considered for publication in the two edited volumes that are expected to be published in the new Religions and Borders series (Lexington Books/Fortress Press).

### **Mission Statement:**

The purpose of this Seminar is to provide a broad forum in which the important but under-studied relationship of friendship can be studied, discussed, challenged, and ultimately enriched – from a variety of religious perspectives. Friendship is a human relationship that is essential for human flourishing. In times ripe with division and conflict, we assert that the study of friendship contributes towards furthering religious understanding and dialogue. Friendship as a religious topic, broadly and creatively defined, touches on matters of faith, ecclesiology, anthropology, history, politics, philosophy, ethics, race, gender, sex, class, and economics among others.

We welcome papers that explore friendship from different disciplines and theological/religious perspectives, and are open to a variety of methodological approaches. Papers from the Seminar are eligible to be considered for inclusion in two published volumes, the first focused on multireligious reflections and the second based on interreligious reflections. The volumes are expected to be published in the Religion and Borders Series (Fortress/Lexington Books).

### **Anonymity:**

Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

### **Method of Submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair – Timani, Hussam, Christopher Newport University, hussam.timani@cnu.edu**

**Chair – Ellithorpe, Anne-Marie, Vancouver School of Theology, aellithorpe@vst.edu**

## **Teaching Against Islamophobia Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

Teaching Against Islamophobia is a new five-year seminar dedicated to cultivating a wider awareness of both the challenges and opportunities faced by engaged scholars combating Islamophobia. Toward that end, we will facilitate conversations at the annual meeting that (1) explore the differences between teaching about Islam and teaching about Islamophobia in both the classroom and wider publics; (2) imagine how pedagogical strategies for such teaching have to be tailored to different contexts; (3) consider the specific challenges of teaching ‘against’ a concept instead of teaching ‘toward’ a more positive end; and (4) understand how Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry function as a form of racism and why naming this bigotry as racism is important.

In the first year we seek papers from scholars in any discipline or subfield that address questions related to the theme “Islamophobia - Connecting the Global and the Local,” with a focus on teaching. An epidemic of anti-Muslim bigotry and racism has emerged not only in the United States and Europe, but globally. Often, however, these events that are important to engaged scholars may feel distant to our students. We are soliciting submissions that address any of the following aspects of this theme and welcome related topics and inquiries that go beyond these questions as well:

1. What are techniques and strategies that are effective for contextually locating Islamophobia that occurs outside North American cultural contexts?
2. How do we begin to overcome the tendency of students to distance themselves from a shared responsibility for Islamophobia when they are confronted by either global or local instances of anti-Muslim bigotry?
3. What are the competing challenges and advantages of using education about Islamophobia to stimulate interreligious dialogue?
4. When addressing major news stories featuring anti-Muslim policies, what skills do students need to develop in order to move ‘beyond the headline?’ How might these skills be transferable or adapted to contexts where scholars are asked to address wider publics?
5. What are the professional and scholarly risks and challenges we face when we name anti-Muslim bias in our educational setting or local communities? How do we begin to address these challenges or mitigate these risks?

Papers and other documents related to presentations will be pre-circulated to the seminar listserv. Please contact a member of the leadership of the seminar for access. Since materials will be pre-circulated, preference will be given to presentations that go beyond the traditional ‘paper-reading’ structure. We seek presentations that will dynamically introduce teaching modules, pedagogical practices, teaching reflections, slides, professional documents or other materials during the time of the seminar.

**Mission Statement:**

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.

**Anonymity:**

Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members.

**Method of Submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair – Jalalzai, Sajida, Trinity University, sajidajalalzai@gmail.com**

**Chair – Goodwin, Megan, Northeastern University, me.goodwin@northeastern.edu**

## **Transnational Religious Expression: Between Asia and North America Seminar**

### **Call Text:**

#### **Power and Politics in Transnational Religious Expressions**

Scholarship on transnational religion often focuses on “flows” and mobilities: how individuals, organizations, and movements span borders, circulating religious practices, artifacts, and ideas in formations beyond the nation-state. But, particularly in an era of increasing strictures against international movement and heightened surveillance of borders, what comes into focus when we shift our attention to the material and discursive conditions that permit, shape, or disallow such mobility?

For the fourth year of our seminar, we will critically engage with questions of power and politics in relation to the transnational movement of religious ideas, practices, and adherents between Asia and North America. We encourage participants to consider how power works on multiple scales; its relationship with capitalism and neoliberalism; states and non-state actors such as corporations, NGOs, and international organizations (like the UN, World Bank, etc); invocations of “human rights,” including “religious freedom”; how power interacts with racial and gender formations; how it shapes and is shaped by religious imaginations; how it impacts the transmission and formation of religious practices, ideas, and communities in new arenas and transnational spaces; what happens when practitioners are undocumented or stateless peoples across networks of transnational religious communities; and what ways social justice and activism are employed as ideational responses to imbalances of power.

This is an open call, but we particularly encourage submissions by participants, meaning anyone who has attended one of our first three seminars. Papers will be posted to the AAR website in advance of the annual meeting to provide ample time for discussion among the panelists, the respondent, and audience members.

Please contact the seminar chairs, Holly Gayley ([gayley@colorado.edu](mailto:gayley@colorado.edu)) and Justin Stein ([justin.stein@kpu.ca](mailto:justin.stein@kpu.ca)) with any questions.

### **Mission Statement:**

Our seminar aims to bring together scholars working on different traditions and regions to participate in a sustained conversation about the translation, transmission, and transformation of religious expressions between Asia and North America. We are interested in ideas and practices that exceed institutional, national, cultural, and ethnic boundaries, and use “transnational” to call attention to the boundaries crossed and recrossed—through mediated and contested spaces—between different cultural contexts as religious ideas, technologies, and actors move across the Pacific and around the globe. In this way, “transnational” is meant to be both a descriptor of the complex realities of religious transmission and a promising analytical space to address related processes such as transculturation, adaptation, exploitation, appropriation, (de)territorialization, and glocalization. Many of these processes challenge the ground on which normative national and religious taxonomies depend, and we are interested

on sharing theories and approaches less oriented toward reifying discrete traditions and more capable of analyzing the hybridity and fluidity of religious expression in the global age.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Stein, Justin, Bukkyo University, [steinjustin@gmail.com](mailto:steinjustin@gmail.com)

**Chair** - Gayley, Holly, University of Colorado, [gayley@colorado.edu](mailto:gayley@colorado.edu)

## **Women's Caucus**

### **Call Text:**

#### Re-Engaging Praxis: A Call for Action

In light of the AAR/SBL 2020 proposed theme: “more inward-looking and self-reflective,” the AAR/ SBL Women’s Caucus, in collaboration with the Feminist Liberation Theologians’ Network (FLTN), invites papers responding to questions about centering voices of those most affected by oppression and those on the ground attempting to stem the tide. As we witness increased media coverage of various communities engaging in fascism, totalitarianism, and global environmental catastrophes, the question arises: ‘What might the feminist study of religion look like if these contexts are seriously engaged as knowledge-producing, and not merely as objects of research?’ We invite research that explores the practical resources Feminist Liberation Theologies offer to combat the growing global backlash. What needs to be reimagined or reclaimed to advance a feminist global trend of shared responsibility, to make the personal political once again, and to develop models of successful political leadership?

#### Emerging Scholars Re-Engaging Praxis

The AAR/SBL Women’s Caucus invites submissions from graduate students engaged in reimagining normative concepts and/or frameworks within the feminist study of religion and theology. We are particularly interested in proposals that introduce innovations that enhance and transform religion and religious practices. In light of the AAR/SBL 2020 proposed theme that is “more inward-looking and self-reflective,” we invite the upcoming generation of scholars to share their research and perspectives on methodologies, pedagogies and political strategies that respond to our current global and U.S. political situation. Responding to this panel is Adriaan Van Klinken, author of the acclaimed book, *Kenyan Christian Queer*, which demonstrates the potential for ethnography to recognize positionality and use it for advantage rather than to be disclaimed or avoided.

#### Re-Engaging Praxis through Publication: New Books on Gender and Religion

The AAR/SBL Women’s Caucus invites proposals from scholars who have published books on gender and religion in 2019 and 2020. Authors will provide an overview of their books and share their research in theology, biblical studies or religious studies, with a focus on its intersection with gender, sexuality, feminist or queer studies. These scholars will also share their experiences regarding strategies and mechanics for getting books on gender and religion published, make suggestions on how to overcome publication challenges in the guild and offer advice to those seeking publication of their own book manuscripts.

#### A Call to Action: Raising up Marginalized Voices and Contributions of Women in the Academy

The 1000 Women in Religion Project, a major initiative of the AAR/SBL's Women's Caucus, is working to add 1000 biographies about women (broadly defined) to Wikipedia where only 18% of the entries are about women. A deficit of reliable secondary sources makes it difficult for wiki-editors to meet Wikipedia's notability and reliability standards. As a practical effort to engage in praxis informed by feminist concerns about gender bias regarding access and production of knowledge, we are seeking biographies about women (1) who are or have been members of the AAR or SBL, (2) who are notable as founders, practitioners, teachers, resistors and/or researchers of the world's religious and wisdom traditions, and (3) who do not have a biographical entry on Wikipedia. We are especially seeking biographies about women from marginalized groups whose accomplishments have made a difference in their specific fields of study, in their own communities and/or to the academy as a whole. Original research including attention to primary sources such as interviews of living subjects, transcriptions of existing recordings and historical documents is encouraged. We welcome analysis that makes a strong case for the subject's notability in her academic area of religious influence.

#### AAR/SBL Women's Caucus Goes International

Mujerist/Womanist/Latinx/Asian feminist scholars of religion have stressed the importance of including the voices of those marginalized and under-represented in academia. They have brought attention to overlooked areas of inquiry, introduced compelling and inspiring ways of thinking and acting that have enriched the intellectual rigor and relevance of theology and religious studies. As the AAR/SBL Annual Conference attracts more international participation, we at the Women's Caucus would like to strengthen our dialogue with those outside the US, contributing to the enrichment of the feminist discourse locally and globally. We invite scholars residing outside of the United States to submit papers focused on the feminist conceptualization of praxis with scholarship and perspectives from their international context that have been under-represented at AAR/ SBL.

#### 1000+ Women in Religion Wikipedia Edit-a-thon: Improving the representation of women in the Academy on Wikipedia

The 1000+ Women in Religion Wikipedia Project—an initiative of the AAR/SBL Women's Caucus—works to raise up the underrecognized work of women (broadly defined) in the world's religious and wisdom traditions by adding 1000+ women onto Wikipedia. This is an initiative addressing the feminist concerns on systemic gender bias on Wikipedia where only 18% of the biographies are about women. In this workshop participants will sign up as wiki-editors and learn the basics of editing. We will do hands on research and editing that improves existing articles about women who have been or are currently members of the AAR and SBL and work on submissions pre-selected from our list of 1000 women. If participants are passionate about a particular unrecognized woman please bring your project along. Participants do not need to be a technological expert!! We will walk you through the Wikipedia editing process one easy step at a time. Join us!!

**Mission Statement:**

The Women's Caucus encourages and creates opportunities for academic activism in the field of Gender and Religion. It also provides a welcoming space for women at the AAR/ SBL national conferences for networking and support.

**Anonymity:**

Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members.

**Method of Submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** – Nogueira-Godsey, Elaine, Methodist Theological School, [nogueirelaine@gmail.com](mailto:nogueirelaine@gmail.com)

**Chair** – Ursic, Elizabeth, Mesa Community College, [Elizabeth.ursic@gmail.com](mailto:Elizabeth.ursic@gmail.com)

## **Association of Practical Theology**

### **Call Text:**

The Association for Practical Theology seeks proposals sharing critical and constructive approaches to teaching practical theology in online and hybrid classrooms. In particular, we seek experienced reflection on how professional, personal, and spiritual formation can be effected in online settings. We also value attention to how the embodied, contextual, liberative, and relational aspects of teaching valued in our discipline are enacted in mediated environments.

Proposals of no more than 750 words should include the title and primary focus of your proposed presentation, a plan for how the content would be taught within the AAR context (we are working to avoid reading papers to one another), the presenter's experience in teaching online, and the subdiscipline(s) within practical theology in which the presenter teaches.

### **Mission Statement:**

The purpose of the Association of Practical Theology (APT) is to promote critical discourse that integrates theological reflection and practice. Reconstituted from its predecessor organizations in 1984, the APT was sparked by the understanding of practical theology as an integrative hermeneutical endeavor at the heart of theological education that includes critical examination of religious traditions and practices and exploration of the contributions of ministerial sub-disciplines. The APT meets annually in conjunction with the AAR and biennially for a comprehensive conference. APT meetings at the AAR draw national and international scholars from a variety of disciplines (members of APT and non-members) and the biennial meeting allows for more in depth study of specific issues and the conduct of official business. The APT posts proceedings, membership information, and other news on its website ([www.practicaltheology.org](http://www.practicaltheology.org)) and welcomes new members from all areas of religious and theological study.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair - Tran, Mai-Anh L.,** Eden Theological Seminary, mtran@eden.edu

**Chair - Parker, Evelyn L.,** Southern Methodist University, eparker@smu.edu

**Chair - Turpin, Katherine,** Iliff School of Theology, kturpin@iliff.edu

## **Colloquium on Violence and Religion**

### **Call Text:**

The Colloquium on Violence and Religion section invites proposals on the theme of René Girard and Christian Spirituality. With particular interest in how Girard's seminal insights may be integrated into Christian spiritual practice, we invite proposals that explore ways Christian spirituality can be illumined or informed by Girard's understanding of mimetic desire. We also invite proposals that consider how mimetic theory itself might be enhanced or critically developed in light of Christian spiritual practices/traditions. Proposals engaging one of the following sub-themes are encouraged:

- Asceticism
- Prayer and contemplation
- Major spiritual figures, texts, traditions
- Monasticism
- Mysticism
- Discernment of desire
- Lectio divina
- Devotional practices

### **Mission Statement:**

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. The coordinator of COVandR at the AAR is Professor Grant Kaplan, Saint Louis University ( [grant.kaplan@slu.edu](mailto:grant.kaplan@slu.edu) ). COVandR membership information: <http://violenceandreligion.com/about/membership>.

**Anonymity:** Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members until after final acceptance/rejection

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Kaplan, Grant, Saint Louis University, grant.kaplan@slu.edu

**Chair** - Reineke, Martha, University of Northern Iowa, marthareineke@gmail.com

## **Hagiography Society**

### **Call Text:**

The Hagiography Society is co-sponsoring a roundtable session with the Comparative Studies in Religion Unit titled "Teaching the Saints through Comparative Pedagogy." Proposals should be emailed to:

Barbara Zimbalist  
University of Texas at El Paso  
[bezimbalist@utep.edu](mailto:bezimbalist@utep.edu)

### **Mission Statement:**

The Hagiography Society was founded in North America in 1990 to promote communication among scholars in the world traditions who study the lives of holy figures, the communities dedicated to those figures, and the textual and material evidence of their cults. We are committed to interdisciplinarity, critical scholarship, and a comparative global approach. For more information about our annual meeting and our other affiliations, as well as our book series, "Sanctity in Global Perspective," see <http://www.hagiographysociety.org/>.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Hoel, Nikolas, Northeastern Illinois University, [n-hoel@neiu.edu](mailto:n-hoel@neiu.edu)

**Chair** - Zimbalist, Barbara, University of Texas, El Paso, [bezimbalist@utep.edu](mailto:bezimbalist@utep.edu)

## **International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies**

### **Call Text:**

Please contact Scott Mitchell ([scott@shin-ibs.edu](mailto:scott@shin-ibs.edu)) for AAR2020 information.

### **Mission Statement:**

The International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies (IASBS) has as its aim the development of international Shin and Pure Land Buddhist studies and the facilitation of exchange among its members. IASBS was founded in the spring of 1982 by a group of scholars in Kyoto in response to the mounting international attention to Shin Buddhism. The members include not only academics, priests, and laypersons affiliated with Shin Buddhism but also those of other academic expertise and religious tradition. IASBS welcomes participation of those with a wide range of interests and specializations within and beyond Pure Land Buddhism. IASBS annually publishes *The Pure Land*, an academic journal in English that contains articles (many from papers presented at IASBS conferences), essays, translations, and book reviews. This is the only scholarly journal specifically dedicated to the study of Pure Land Buddhism. The association also publishes a newsletter twice a year, in the spring and fall. For more information, visit <http://www.iasbs.org/>.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Blum, Mark L., University of California, Berkeley, [mblum@berkeley.edu](mailto:mblum@berkeley.edu)

**Chair** - Mitchell, Scott, Institute of Buddhist Studies, [scott@shin-ibs.edu](mailto:scott@shin-ibs.edu)

## **Karl Barth Society of North America**

### **Call Text:**

For the 2020 meeting, the Karl Barth Society of North America welcomes proposals on the following topics:

- Barth, Nation, and Nationalism
- Barth and the Doctrine of Creation

Proposals that interact with the three volumes of the *Karl Barth in Conversation* series (WJK) also would be welcomed. Proposals on related topics will be considered.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Karl Barth Society of North America exists to encourage a critical and constructive theology in continuity with the work of Karl Barth. The Society's membership is open to all interested parties: scholars, students, pastors, laypersons.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Hunsinger, George, Princeton Theological Seminary, george.hunsinger@ptsem.edu

**Chair** - Molnar, Paul D., St. Johnand#039;s University, molnarp@stjohns.edu

**Chair** - Sonderegger, Katherine, Virginia Theological Seminary, ksonderegger@vts.edu

**Chair** - Johnson, Keith, Wheaton College, keith.johnson@wheaton.edu

## **North American Association for the Study of Religion**

### **Call Text:**

Show Us Your Data: Method and Theory in Action

The past five years, NAASR's meetings focused on specific themes (theory, method, data, key categories, and the field). These meetings addressed a range of topics—some familiar, some new—and resulted in insightful discussions at the meetings and beyond. These meetings and discussions tended to dwell on the theoretical. At NAASR 2020, however, we are asking participants to focus on their data, showing how method and theory inform their work in their local data domains.

Breaking with the model used for the past several annual meetings, we have an open call inviting participants to submit roundtable discussions (each roundtable should include five-seven participants). We will also accept individual submissions or partial panels seeking additional participants, although priority will be given to complete roundtables. The participants in each panel will collectively complete their presentations within one hour, leaving roughly an hour for open discussion.

This is therefore a call for roundtables. Each submission should include:

1. a working title
  2. a list of participants
  3. a summary of the broader topic the roundtable will address
  4. a brief description of each participant's work
  5. reflections on the roundtable's larger theoretical intervention(s)/contribution(s) to the field
- Potential topics include, but are not limited to, area studies, reflections on influential scholarly works, and roundtables on specific topics.

We invite scholars from diverse data domains to contribute to each roundtable. Each submission should also include graduate students and early career scholars.

Following the precedent set over the past several years, the aim once again is to publish these workshops as a book under the NAASR Working Papers series with Equinox Publishing.

Please send complete panels or proposals as a file attachment by March 1, 2020, to NAASR VP Rebekka King at [rebekka.king@mtsu.edu](mailto:rebekka.king@mtsu.edu)

### **Mission Statement:**

The North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR) was initially formed in 1985 by E. Thomas Lawson, Luther H. Martin, and Donald Wiebe, to encourage the historical, comparative, structural, theoretical, and cognitive approaches to the study of religion among North American scholars; to represent North American scholars of religion at the international level; and to sustain communication between North American scholars and their international colleagues engaged in the study of religion.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

**Method of submission:**

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

Please send complete panels or proposals as a file attachment by March 1, 2020, to NAASR VP Rebekka King at [rebekka.king@mtsu.edu](mailto:rebekka.king@mtsu.edu)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Stoddard, Brad, McDaniel College, [bradlstoddard@gmail.com](mailto:bradlstoddard@gmail.com)

**Chair** - King, Rebekka, Middle Tennessee State University, [rebekka.king@mtsu.edu](mailto:rebekka.king@mtsu.edu)

## **North American Paul Tillich Society**

### **Call Text:**

For its November 20, 2020 Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, immediately prior to the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, the North American Paul Tillich Society seeks paper or panel proposals for two sessions. We seek papers that either interpret Tillich in his historical context with implications drawn for present concerns, or that engage Tillich as a theological resource, either constructively or methodologically, for addressing contemporary society and culture. The generality of this call reflects the desire of the board to engage broadly across the interests represented in the Society and to draw beyond our current membership to welcome new and compelling voices into our number.

Panels at the 2020 meeting will be limited to 90 minutes, and so we would prefer papers and panels that commit to pre-circulating papers so that the meeting time may focus on brief summaries, engagement among panelists, and engagement with annual meeting participants.

Paper proposals should include a 300 word abstract and a CV. Panel proposals should include a 200 word abstract of the panel and 300 word abstracts of each of the papers on the panel along with CVs of each of the participants. Proposals should be submitted to [binsong1981@gmail.com](mailto:binsong1981@gmail.com) no later than April 15, 2020. Accepted papers or panels will be notified by May 15, and papers are encouraged to be submitted for pre-circulation by September 1.

### **Mission Statement:**

Founded in 1975, the 250-member NAPTS is concerned with Paul Tillich's (1886-1965) philosophical-theological thought, with its analysis, critique, and revision; with the implications and the use of this thought in political, social, psychotherapeutic, scientific, artistic, and ethico-religious spheres; the application of Tillich's thought to questions he himself could never have imagined in his lifetime; finally, with the impact and the creative extension of Tillich's legacy. The Society meets annually in conjunction with AAR, organizes international conferences, collaborates with the German, French speaking, and several other Tillich societies, awards an annual student paper prize, and sponsors publications. The quarterly Bulletin carries papers from meetings and other information on Tillich, publication, letters, et al. Dues \$50/year. Membership: Frederick Parrella, Religious Studies, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, 95053-0335 or [fparrella@scu.edu](mailto:fparrella@scu.edu). More information is available at <http://www.napts.org/>.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

**Chair** - Nord, Ilona, University of Würzburg, ilona.nord@uni-wuerzburg.de

**Chair** - Parrella, Frederick J., Santa Clara University, fparrella@scu.edu

**Chair** - Song, Bin, Washington College, binsong1981@gmail.com

**Chair** - Whitney, Lawrence, Boston University, brlawrencelc@mac.com

## **Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts**

### **Call Text:**

The Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts (SCRIPT) invites proposals for papers that examine the social and cultural functions of books and texts beyond their semantic meaning and interpretation. For one session, SCRIPT invites proposals on "digital sacred texts." With the digital turn, texts are encountered in new material forms that impact the ways they are read, recited, and interacted with. Questions we hope to think about include: What is gained or lost when a text is used in digital formats, as compared to print culture? How is personal, ritual, or scholarly engagement with sacred texts impacted by the digital turn? Proposals on any aspect of digital sacred texts are welcome.

A second session is an open call for any proposals that examine books and texts in terms of their display as cultural artifacts, their ritual use in religious and political ceremonies, their performance by recitation and theater, their depiction in art, and/or display in museums.

For more information about SCRIPT, please see: <http://script-site.net/>

### **Mission Statement:**

The Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts (SCRIPT) was founded in 2010 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. The society sponsors programming at existing regional and international scholarly meetings and at colleges and universities. We welcome new members and ideas for programs and venues to host them. For more information, see <http://script-site.net/>.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

PAPERS

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Plate, S. Brent, Hamilton College, [splate@hamilton.edu](mailto:splate@hamilton.edu)

**Chair** - Watts, James W., Syracuse University, [jwwatts@syr.edu](mailto:jwwatts@syr.edu)

## **Society for the Study of Chinese Religions**

### **Call Text:**

We place our call for papers on our website (<https://www.chinesereligions.org/>), as well as through email lists and our Facebook page.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Society for the Study of Chinese Religions is an international non-profit scholarly society dedicated to the study of Chinese religion. We seek to promote the study of all forms of religious belief and practice in China (and in Chinese communities around the world) and to provide opportunities for the sharing of research and materials for publication and teaching, especially through our bi-annually published Journal of Chinese Religions. To learn more about SSCR and to become a member, please access our website.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Raz, Gil, Dartmouth College, [gil.raz@dartmouth.edu](mailto:gil.raz@dartmouth.edu)

**Chair** - Sun, Anna, Kenyon College, [suna@kenyon.edu](mailto:suna@kenyon.edu)

## **Society for the Study of Japanese Religions**

### **Call Text:**

For our next session in Boston (November 19-23, 2020). The Society for the Study of Japanese Religions will sponsor a professional development workshop for early career scholars. We seek junior and mid-career professionals who are in the midst of - or have successfully navigated - the job market both in and out of academe. In particular, we seek mutual mentors who can share their wisdom and experience, as well as their life hacks, war stories, and sense of humor as they advise others through the major hurdles of job applications, interviews, negotiating contracts, revising the diss-to-ms, preparing the tenure portfolios, and establishing work-life balance. Other suggestions are most welcome. For possible co-sponsorship with the Japanese Religions Unit.

Contact: Pamela Winfield [pwinfield@elon.edu](mailto:pwinfield@elon.edu), Asuka Sango [asango@carleton.edu](mailto:asango@carleton.edu), and Levi McLaughlin [lmclaugh2@ncsu.edu](mailto:lmclaugh2@ncsu.edu)

### **Mission Statement:**

The Society for the Study of Japanese Religions (SSJR) is an international association of scholars committed to the academic study of religion in Japan. Membership is open to graduate students, researchers, and professors of all ranks whose research is related to the study of Japanese religions. In addition to the AAR, the Society is also affiliated with the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) and hosts biannual meetings at the AAR and AAS on a variety of topics related to the study of Japanese religion. In addition to academic research, the meetings are used as a forum to discuss issues that affect its members, such as publishing, teaching, study abroad programs, and navigating the job market. The aim of the Society is to provide scholars of Japanese religion with a platform to network and generate dialogue on topics concerning the field of Religious Studies as well as the multidisciplinary study of Japan.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - McMullen, Matthew, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, [mcmullen@nanzan-u.ac.jp](mailto:mcmullen@nanzan-u.ac.jp)

**Chair** - Curley, Melissa Anne-Marie, Ohio State University, [curley.32@osu.edu](mailto:curley.32@osu.edu)

**Chair** - Winfield, Pamela D., Elon University, [pwinfield@elon.edu](mailto:pwinfield@elon.edu)

## **Society of Christian Philosophers**

### **Call Text:**

The Society of Christian Philosophers is soliciting papers for one of its two sessions at the 2020 Annual Meeting. Although we are happy to consider papers in any area of Christian philosophy, for next year we are especially interested in putting together a panel on one of the following topics: the hiddenness of God, religious experience, children and philosophy of religion, social ontology and philosophy of religion, or psychology and theology and philosophy of religion.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Society of Christian Philosophers was organized in 1978 to promote fellowship among Christian Philosophers and to stimulate study and discussion of issues which arise from their Christian and philosophical commitments. One of its chief aims is to go beyond the usual philosophy of religion sessions at the American Philosophical Association and to stimulate thinking about the nature and role of Christian commitment in philosophy. Informal discussion among several Christian philosophers led them to believe that it was possible to form a group designed to promote philosophizing and fellowship among philosophers who shared a commitment to Christianity. Past Presidents include William Alston, Robert Merrihew Adams, Alvin Plantinga, Marilyn McCord Adams, George Mavrodes, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Eleonore Stump, C. Stephen Evans, Robert Audi, Peter van Inwagen, and Michael Rea. Michael Bergmann of Purdue University is the current President of the SCP, and Christina Van Dyke of Calvin College is the Executive Director. The Society is open to anyone interested in philosophy who considers herself or himself a Christian. Membership is not restricted to any particular "school" of philosophy or to any branch of Christianity, nor to professional philosophers. For more information, visit <http://societyofchristianphilosophers.com/>.

**Anonymity:** Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

### **Method of submission:**

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

### **Leadership:**

**Chair** - Cockayne, Joshua, University of St Andrews, jlc22@st-andrews.ac.uk

**Chair** - Panchuk, Michelle, Murray State University, mpanchuk@murraystate.edu

**Chair** - Rea, Michael, University of Notre Dame, michael.rea2@gmail.com

**Chair** - Bergmann, Michael, Purdue University, bergmann@purdue.edu