



Department of Religious Studies
NEWSLETTER

2008-09/FALL 2008/Volume 9

Greetings from the Chair:

My colleagues are so easygoing and so modest that someone who does not know their written work cannot fully appreciate how intellectually ambitious and productive they are. They make exceptional scholarly contributions, and we have become a major center of Religious Studies. But most of you *do* know how distinguished they are as teachers, and that this remains their highest priority. I am honored to chair a department where colleagues talk (often, incessantly) about teaching, and where students (incessantly) come to my office to tell me of the impact a Religious Studies professor had on them. We never stop talking about how to become better teachers – indeed, one candidate for the Hinduism position this past year wrote that they noticed a “culture of teaching” in the department. Williamsburg may have been a tiny bit off the beaten path in the world of Religious Studies, but this is true no longer. A student who pursues a degree in Religious Studies, or a student who just takes a single course, will find committed mentors among my colleagues as well as brilliant scholars and distinguished teachers.

Marc Lee Raphael
Nathan and Sophia Professor of Judaic Studies and Director of the Program and
Minor in Judaic Studies, and
Professor of Religious Studies and Chair,
Department of Religious Studies

The Faculty Changes

On Leave Fall 2008 / Spring 2009

Alison I. Beach
Michael A. Daise

On Leave Spring 2009

Kevin A. Vose

Visiting Professors, 2008-2009

Jason Danner: M.A., University of Virginia; teaching Religion and Ethics (F'08, S'09), Medicine and Ethics (F'08, S'09), and a Freshman Seminar (S'09).

Donald Polaski: Ph.D. and M.Div., Duke University; teaching Christian Origins (F'08, S'09), Judaism in the Greco-Roman World (F'08), Jesus and the Gospels (S'09), and Freshman Seminar (S'09).

Aubrey Watkins: Th.M, Princeton Theological Seminary; Letters of Paul (F'08)

The Faculty News

WELCOME RAVI M. GUPTA!

The Department is delighted to welcome our newest faculty member, **Ravi Gupta**, Assistant Professor of Hinduism. Prior to this, he taught at Centre College and the University of Florida. Additionally, Dr. Gupta was a Jr. Research Fellow at the University of Oxford in England. Every summer he teaches an intensive Sanskrit course for the University of Wales Open Learning Religious Studies Program.

Dr. Gupta's research interests include Sanskrit commentary, Hinduism, and interreligious dialogue. He is the author of *Chaitanya Vaishnava Vedanta: When Knowledge Meets Devotion* (Routledge 2007) as well as several academic articles. He is currently writing a book on Chaitanya Vaishnava philosophy for the Ashgate *World Philosophies* series as well as co-editing a collection of articles on the Bhagavata Purana, one of India's most treasured sacred texts.

Dr. Gupta completed a B.A. in philosophy and a B.S. in mathematics at Boise State University, where he received the Silver Medallion, the highest honor bestowed by the university. He holds a master's in religious studies and a D.Phil. in Hinduism from the University of Oxford.

Michael Daise: During 2007-2008 Mr. Daise was Acting Chair of the Department and taught Christian Origins in the fall, spring and summer sessions. He completed an article for the Princeton-Prague Symposium on the Historical Jesus, continued writing his monograph on biblical quotations in the Fourth Gospel for Editions Gabalda, Paris, and was awarded the Catholic Biblical Association's Visiting Professorship to the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, in which capacity he will be conducting research in the spring of 2009.

Julie Galambush: This year Julie Galambush has contributed articles to *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* and *The Oxford Annotated Jewish New Testament*, as well as the "Ezekiel" annotations to Westminster John Knox's *Discipleship Study Bible*. In November she will deliver a paper, "Who Gets the New Covenant?," in the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures Section at the Society of Biblical Literature Meeting. This paper is *supposed* to help her decide whether or not to start a larger project on the relationship between covenant and monotheism; next year she'll let you know whether or not it did.

David Holmes: Mr. Holmes has now entered his forty-third year at William & Mary. Thanks to the letters of support received from alumni, faculty, students, and scholars in his field, he received the annual Thomas Jefferson Award at Charter Day in February, 2008. Entitled "Not Like Unto the Nations" and available on email to anyone who requests it, his brief talk at Charter Day deals with the liberal-arts heritage of William and Mary.

Mr. Holmes gave the Shriver Lectures at Stetson University, the Puff Lecture at Miami University, and the Thomas Jefferson Lecture at William Paterson University. In addition, he spoke to the annual Monticello-Stratford Hall Seminar, to the Albemarle County Historical Society, and to members of the entering class of 2012 who live in the Piedmont area of Virginia. At the annual meeting in Washington, DC of the American Society of Church History, he spoke on the controversy over the removal of the cross from the Wren Chapel. He continued to serve as advisor to the Bishop Madison Society.

Mr. Holmes is currently completing a book on the faiths of the post-WWII American presidents; the book is the expanded version of the Shriver Lectures. He is scheduled to go on sabbatical for the 2009-2010 academic year, finish a book on muscular Christianity, and retirement will follow soon thereafter.

John Morreall: John Morreall reworked his Theory and Method class, adding a section on evolutionary psychology. He published articles and chapters on humor in religion, and on the benefits of humor. With Tamara Sonn, he continued writing a book for Blackwell Publishers: *The Religion Toolkit: A Complete Guide to Studying Religion*. He hosted a scholar on a research leave from Henan Technical University, Prof. Zhang Tianguang, who sat in on his class, "Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion" and added comments on Eastern religions. To kick off a new program in humor research at the University of Michigan, he participated in an all-day program featuring five scholars and five producers of humor, including the Cartoon Editor of the *New Yorker* and two writers of *The Daily Show*. He also did several media interviews, including one with the *Wall Street Journal*.

Marc Lee Raphael: Marc Lee Raphael begins his final two years (Years Nine and Ten) as Chair of the Department of Religious Studies in 2008-09. During the first part of 2008, he published two books: *The Columbia History of Jews and Judaism in America* (Columbia University Press), a book of 18 essays that he edited and introduced, and *Diary of a Los Angeles Jew, 1947-1973: Autobiography as Autofiction* (Department of Religious Studies, College of William and Mary). He is currently writing a history of the synagogue in America for NYU Press.

Tamara Sonn: The highlights of Professor Tamara Sonn's year were, as always, provided by students. In April she hosted the 25th annual conference of the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies (ACSIS) at W&M's DC center, which featured presentations by former students Chrystie Flournoy, Rebecca Skreslett, and Azita Ranjbar. All have continued in Islamic Studies and are near completing their Ph.D.s. Summer brought a thrilling opportunity for current student Madeeha Hameed, when she was selected as one of four students (and the only W&M student) to accompany American University's Professor Akbar Ahmed on a nationwide trip, researching the state of religious pluralism in America. (Madeeha's trip was supported by generous grants from the College of Arts and Sciences and the Reves Center for International Studies.) Their project will culminate in a PBS special on the topic. Meanwhile, Professor Sonn was lecturing in Pakistan, and researching Islamic movements in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. The results of her research were presented in a lecture to the U.S. Joint Forces Command in August. In addition to her regular teaching, Professor Sonn continues to edit Wiley-Blackwell's Religion Compass ([www.religion-](http://www.religion-compass.com)

[compass.com](http://www.religion-compass.com)), Oxford Islamic Studies Online (www.oxfordislamicstudies.com), and serve as Oxford Bibliographies Online: Islamic Studies editor-in-chief.

Kevin Vose: Kevin Vose taught a new Freshman Seminar in Fall 2007, Buddhist Enlightenment in Western Imagination, examining the western interaction with Buddhism over the past two hundred years. He also taught Introduction to Buddhism. He served as co-coordinator of William and Mary's East Asian Studies program. He co-edited the Buddhism section of Blackwell's online journal, Religion Compass. He presented a paper on Indian and Tibetan Buddhist notions of ineffability at the 2007 meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Diego. He organized and participated in a panel of Japanese, Tibetan, European, and American scholars studying a recently recovered collection of early Tibetan manuscripts at the 2008 meeting of the International Association of Buddhist Studies at Emory University. He was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities summer research stipend for his study of these manuscripts. The College gave Kevin a parental leave in the spring semester to care for his newborn son, Julian. He is now expecting the birth of his first book, Resurrecting Candrakirti, in November.

Honors Theses 2008

Corinna Hann, "*Get back to where you once belonged': The Beatles, Post-Colonialism, and Religion*" (High Honors)

***David M. McClendon**, "*Plugging into Worship: How Contemporary Christian Music Is Impacting Church Musicians*" (Highest Honors)

Natasha L. Mikles, "*I'm Not a Monk, but I'm a Bodhisattva: Green Gulch Farm and the Explosion of Zen Buddhism in America*" (High Honors)

Coury A. Shadyac, "*Jihad: A Contemporary Perspective with Historical Foundations*" (Honors)

***Katherine D. Willson**, "*Breaking the Silence: South African Muslim Responses to HIV/AIDS and a Theology of Compassion*" (Highest Honors)

*Awarded the Jack D. Van Horn prize for highest honors

Alumni News

Erin Epperson '04: Erin completed an MA at the University of Chicago Divinity School in December '07. She entered her first year of Ph.D. studies in Fall '08 at the University of Chicago through the South Asian Languages and Civilizations department for the study of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist texts.

Brantley Gasaway '96: In May '08 Brantley received his Ph.D. in American Religious Studies from UNC-Chapel Hill and he is now entering his second year as Visiting Assistant Professor of Law, Politics & Society at Drake University in Des Moines, IA.

Joanna Greer '07: Joanna completed her master's degree at Oxford.

Stephen Ko '96: After Stephen completed his MD from the Medical College of Georgia, he finished a preventive medicine residency with a MPH from Columbia University. Currently Stephen is finishing up pediatric training at Cornell (New York Presbyterian Hospital in NYC). At the same time, he is part of the pastoral staff at Vision Church and he is concurrently working on his MDiv at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

Meredith McBride '01: In '07 Meredith ran her first marathon! And for the BIG news...in March '08, Meredith got married to Josh Cavan, a wonderful Irish-Catholic Marine Corps officer from Buffalo, NY.

Timothy Pollock '95: Tim is back in grad school, going for a master's in linguistics.

Mark Tolliver '99: Mark and Katie welcomed the birth of their son, Julian David Tolliver, on September 4, 2008.

Lectures

Thanks to the generous donations from our friends and alumni*, the department is able to sponsor lecture series and host events for our concentrators. Here are highlights from our 2007/08 schedule:

10/19/07: Sarah Cramsey '04, Ph.D. student, University of California, Berkeley. **“Saying Kaddish in Prague: Shoah Memorialization in Czechoslovakia”**

10/30/07: Barbara King, Professor, College of William and Mary. Panel discussion of her recent book, *Evolving God: A Provocative View on the Origins of Religion*. Panel members: Professors Galambush and Morreall.

11/14/07: Daniel Zemel, Rabbi, Temple Micah, Washington DC. **“Reform Judaism in America: A Close Reading of the 1999 Platform”**

11/27/07: Brad L. Weiss, Professor, College of William and Mary. **“African Traditional Religions”**

12/03/07: William D. Rudolph, Rabbi, Congregation Beth El, Bethesda, MD. **“Conservative Judaism in America: A Close Reading of the 1988 Platform”**

12/ --/07: Michael Brenner, Professor, Chair, Jewish History and Culture, Munich, Germany. Topic: **“After the Holocaust”**

01/29/08: John Pollini, Professor, University of Southern Florida. **“Christian Destruction and Desecration of Images of Classical Antiquity”**

03/13/08: “Let’s Talk About Studying Abroad” event (dinner and discussion) for Religious Studies Majors and Minors.

03/25/08: Maggie Wunnenberg '02, Visiting Instructor, College of William and Mary. **“The Victim, the Threat, and the Martyr: Images of the Child Shoah Survivor in the Immediate Postwar Period”**

03/31/08: Marcie Cohen Ferris, Assistant Professor, American Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Associate Director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies. **“Religion and Domestic Culture: Judaism at Home in the American South”**

03/31/08: Lloyd Steffen, Professor, Lehigh University. **“The Moral Meaning of Fetal Innocence: An Approach to Abortion through Just War Thinking”**

*July 07-June 08 Alumni donors: W. Bangel, D. Belen, W. Bossin, C. Brockwell, B. Bromley, B. Brown, P. Carr, Mr. & Mrs. J. Comey, Jr., J. Crane, J. Devereaux, A. Eichel, E. Forrest, K. Goldberg, M. Golub, J. Harris, K. Hill, K. Koch, D. McClendon, A. McIntosh, R. Miller, K. Nelson, R. O’Callahan, S. Page, A. Pinkerton, M. Poteet, N. Ronollo, S. Schworer, C. Shadyac, B. Soffin, K. Toker, R. Tuttle, K. Waller, J. Watson, Dr. & Mrs. D. Willson

Religious Ethics Courses

Thanks to a generous grant from three sources, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, James and Patrice Comey, and Lockheed Martin Corporation, the department will have a visiting professor of religious ethics for at least five consecutive years. Our first visitor has been Jason Danner from the University of Virginia, and we will soon begin our search for another visiting professor for 2009-10. In addition to Religion and Ethics, the visitor will offer courses in Medicine and Ethics, Ecology and Ethics, and Warfare and Ethics. The department is hoping to find other generous donors who might fund a visiting professor when this money runs out.

Religious Humor

A religious studies major goes to the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. She asks the clerk, "May I have 50 Christmas stamps?"

The clerk says, "What denomination?"

"God help us! Has it come to this?" the religious studies major asks rhetorically. "Oh well. Then give me 6 Catholic, 12 Presbyterian, 10 Lutheran and 22 Baptists."

Courses 2008-2009

FALL 2008

R.S. 150: Fr Seminar – Adam and Eve	J. Galambush
R.S. 201: Intro to Religion	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 203: Hist/Rel of Ancient Israel	J. Galambush
R.S. 204: Christian Origins	D. Polaski
R.S. 205: Reading Bible in Hebrew I	N. Zahavi-Ely
R.S. 211: Intro History of Jewish Thought	M. Raphael
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	T. Sonn
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	R. Gupta
R.S. 214: Intro to Buddhism	K. Vose
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	J. Danner
R.S. 308: Topics: Buddhism Philosophy	K. Vose
R.S. 315: Judaism in the Greco-Roman World	D. Polaski
R.S. 318: Islam in the Modern World	T. Sonn
R.S. 320: Pagans and Christians	J. Donahue
R.S. 322: Medicine and Ethics	J. Danner
R.S. 335: Modern Religious Thought	J. Morreall
R.S. 345: Religion in America til 1840	D. Holmes
R.S. 349: Worship and Architecture	D. Holmes
R.S. 357: Letters of Paul	A. Watkins
R.S. 391: Theory of Religion	J. Morreall

SPRING 2009

R.S. 150: Fr Seminar – Reverence, Responsibility and Nature	J. Danner
R.S. 150: Fr Seminar – Reading Genesis	D. Polaski
R.S. 203: Hist/Rel of Ancient Israel	A. Watkins
R.S. 204: Christian Origins	D. Polaski
R.S. 206: Reading Bible in Hebrew II	N. Zahavi-Ely
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	T. Sonn
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	R. Gupta
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	J. Danner
R.S. 305: Biblical Wisdom: Job and Proverbs	J. Galambush
R.S. 308: Topics: Violence, War and Peace	J. Galambush
R.S. 309: The Holocaust	M. Raphael
R.S. 317: Women in the Muslim World	T. Sonn
R.S. 322: Medicine and Ethics	J. Danner
R.S. 330: Significant Books in Western Religion	D. Holmes
R.S. 342: Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion	J. Morreall
R.S. 346: Religion in America, 1840-Pres	D. Holmes
R.S. 360: Gods & Goddesses of India	R. Gupta
R.S. 391: Theory and Method	J. Morreall

Donor Opportunity

If you wish to support the Department of Religious Studies by contributing to our operating funds, you may do so by sending a **check** made payable to the William and Mary Foundation and designate it for the Department of Religious Studies. The mailing address is The Department of Religious Studies, College of William and Mary, P.O. Box 8795, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795. To provide more specific with your gift, please mention one of the codes (below) in your letter or on your check.

<u>A</u>	Jack Van Horn Prize for the Best Honors Thesis
<u>B</u>	Asia/Middle East Religion Program Fund
<u>C</u>	Chair's Discretionary Fund to Support the Activities of the Department
<u>D</u>	Stephen J. and Diane P. Lovell Endowment Fund to Support the Teaching of Biblical Hebrew
<u>E</u>	Religious Studies Fund for the Department Library [Wren] Book Purchases
<u>F</u>	Religious Studies Account
<u>G</u>	Alumni to Campus to Speak to Students
<u>H</u>	Distinguished Scholars to Campus to Speak to Students
<u>I</u>	Annual Lecture on a Contemporary Religion Issue

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