

# CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter of the Department of Religion at the University of Florida Spring 2007

FROM THE CHAIR

## The High Cost of Not Knowing About Religion

by David Hackett

Why should anyone take a religion course? This question was recently debated in the student newspaper, *the Alligator*. Noting the recommendation of a Harvard faculty committee that all students take at least one religion course, the student columnist argued that UF students need to understand the role of religion in today's world. A number of letters to the editor responded, most stating that religion was largely irrelevant to their undergraduate education.

What is the cost of remaining uneducated about religion? Though polls show that more than 90 percent of Americans believe in God, few know anything about religion. According to a recent study of *Religious Literacy* by Stephen Prothero: only half of all Americans can name just one of the four Gospels; many think that Sodom and Gomorrah were a married couple; and evangelical Christians know only a little more than their non-evangelical counterparts.

This is not just a matter of choosing to ignore an area of knowledge; rather, religious illiteracy threatens our ability to understand and participate in our civil society.

Though about two-thirds of Americans support teaching both evolution and creationism in the public schools, how can we know what creationism is all about, or intelligently debate its place in our schools, if less than half of us can identify the book of Genesis?

Biblical references abound in public conversations about stem cell research and gay marriage, so how can we make informed decisions about these hot button issues without

knowing something about the Bible?

Handicapped by such illiteracy, we are unable to grasp the significance of religious references and intentions among our political leaders and fellow Americans.

It is less of a surprise but even more of a concern, because of America's role as a world leader, that the public knows even less about Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism than it does about Christianity and Judaism. As Prothero points out, after 9/11 President Bush frequently stated that "Islam is peace," while at the same time the Reverend Jerry Falwell declared that the prophet Muhammad was a "terrorist." Who did we believe? Because of our ignorance of religion, "most of us had no way to judge."

And when it comes to other religions, this ignorance can be deadly. Can we understand the war in Iraq without knowing something about Islam? Isn't it clear by now that we need to have some basic understanding of the difference between Sunnis and Shiites? Religious understandings lay beneath so many of our world's political conflicts; how can we afford to remain in the dark about basic religious history and texts?

Here is the point: whether or not we ourselves are religious, the more we learn about religion the less likely we will be to surrender our voices, through our lack of religious knowledge, to political leaders who fre-



quently understand their actions in a religious context. The benefit, at least, is a more engaged political conversation that begins to recognize the often unchallenged and powerful influence of religion in today's world.

Educating students on the significance of religion in our contemporary global society is central to the teaching mission of our department. Taking a religion course is a step toward learning about the deeper meanings of so many of the critical issues that confront all of us today.

*The more we learn about religion the less likely we will be to surrender our voices, through our lack of religious knowledge, to political leaders who frequently understand their actions in a religious context.*

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# Why Did You Major In Religion? *The Alumni Respond*

## Why Major in Religion?

Religion majors get this question quite a bit (and frequently from their parents). One way of responding is to see religion as part of the humanities and, like any humanities major, religion students learn to read, write, communicate and think critically. In this sense, the aim of a major in religion is not unlike the aim of a university education as it always has been and continues to this day. Students are supposed to gain a range of skills and become acquainted with the “best and brightest” of the world’s intellectual traditions so that they can function as autonomous and thoughtful adults. The assumption is that knowledge will continue to change, not remain the same, and therefore students so educated will be prepared for such change. Within this larger purpose, students of religion have a particular interest in understanding the underlying cultural motivations of themselves, their society, and the larger world in which we live.

“But really now,” we can hear others impatiently asking our majors, “What is the ‘cash value’ of a religion degree? What are you going to do with this after you graduate?”

Last fall we asked graduates on our alumni listserv to take a few moments to respond to these questions. Here are some of their responses.

Becoming a major usually started with an interesting course or compelling professor.

I was a pre-med major when I first took Dr. Isenberg’s intro class on “The Religious Experience”...and it changed the way I thought about a lot of things. I decided to do something that really interested me...on a very deep and utterly human level, so I became a religion major.

—Scott Erker, 1990

This interest often broadened into a larger search for understanding.

...after taking one religion class at UF.. I realized that there was no better way to learn about the people I live with in this

world than to know something about their religion. It was also the best way to get a better perspective on my own beliefs by seeing how others view my religion. It was just as helpful, if not more, to learn how to ask the right question as it was to find the answers.

—Louis Reinstein, 1996

The search for understanding might then extend to other cultures.

I studied religion to explore how the rest of the world does things. It helped me to better understand other cultures. After all, 90% of what we as humans do on a daily basis stems from some sort of religious belief (either learned from childhood, current belief, etc.). It’s a key into the minds of the other folks on the planet.

—Carolyn Kivler, 2000

Along the way some realized that they were acquiring important communication and analytic skills.

I also realized early on that the academic study of religion would provide an opportunity to develop excellent skills in critical thinking and analysis that would serve me well in anything I sought to do in the future.

—Fred Chaiken, 1978

## What Have You Done with Your Religion Major?

Taken together, these skills and interests have turned out to have a broad application as our majors have entered into the workplace.

Will Setliff (1993), Vice President of Innovation and Interactive Marketing for Target Corporation, sees his religion courses as vital to his career preparation. As he put it: “Religion and marketing are not that far apart.” Successful marketing skills are developed “through understanding and respecting diverse contexts, realities, and systems of meaning.” In this way, an undergraduate major in religion provided Will with a “tool

set” that has allowed him to flourish in the field of marketing.

Frank Jones (1984), now a Colonel in the Air Force stationed in the Pentagon, sees his religion major as contributing to making him a “critical thinker and well-rounded educated person.”

Lawyers too see a continuing value in their religion coursework. “In religion class,” states Harvey Alper (1968), “I learned a sort of worshipful tolerance of superficially divergent but often fundamentally convergent views.” “These skills,” notes Fred Chaiken, “have absolutely helped me in the practice of law in terms of analysis of texts, understanding the backgrounds of diverse individuals (including prospective jurors) and in providing background in the development of legal codes and legal reasoning.”

Family Therapist Bhakti Cohen (2000) believes that her undergraduate religion education “helped [her] work more holistically with...those whose religions differed from mainstream Judeo/Christian beliefs.”

An interest in ethics and other cultures, led Chris Cudebec (1997) to become a Peace Corps volunteer in Albania. “I am co-founder and chair of the Peace Corps anti-trafficking in persons committee and it has furthered my interest in social ethics.”

Finally, a number of majors have continued on in religion as teachers, professors, and ministers. Phil Schwadel (1997), Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, says that he liked his “sociology of religion and ethics” classes “so much” that he went on to get a PhD in this sub-field. In a different vein, Ryan Roberts (2002), Director of Student Ministries for Trinity Presbyterian Church in Clearwater, says that “majoring in religion at UF helped solidify my faith” and lead him into full-time ministry. Similarly, James Kahn (2001) a fourth year rabbinical student reports that his experiences in the religion department “pushed me to become the person I am today. I am deeply grateful.”

*For more on our alumni and where they are today, see Alumni Updates, page 3.*

## Russell Lowell Jaberg Award

Since 2001, the Department of Religion has chosen annual recipients of the Russell Lowell Jaberg Award for Academic Excellence. Dr. Russell Lowell Jaberg, retired University of Florida humanities professor, devoted his life to his love of religion and theology. This memorial award was created in his honor.

Two students shared the award this year, with another two serving as runners-up. **Charlotte Williams** is a double major in political science and religion. She will be attending the University of North Carolina Law School in the fall. **Sam Julien** is completing an honors thesis in patristics and working to create a non-profit student organization called the Christian Service Network. Both Charlotte and Sam were awarded membership in Phi Beta Kappa this year. **Eric Dorman**, one of two runners-up, will be attending the California Institute of Integral Studies in the fall. Finally, **Sydney-Marie Schaeff** will be teaching high school science in Los Angeles next fall as part of the Teach for America program while pursuing her Masters in Education.

## Kujali International

In addition to working for Teach for America next year, Jaberg runner-up Sydney-Marie Schaeff will continue to develop the non-profit organization she has recently begun. Kujali International is an inter-faith organization that seeks to partner with indigenous leaders of grassroots, faith-based, development-oriented organizations centered around the holistic care of orphans and vulnerable children in developing countries. They plan to do this through networking, fundraising, resourcing, and consultations.

This initiative began during Sydney's study abroad term in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in the fall of 2005. It was then that she got involved with the Hananasif Orphanage Center, which subsequently inspired the vision for Kujali. Since then, her organization has raised funds for all kinds of things: Carolyn Peck, the UF women's basketball coach at that time, donated funds for the Center's first computer; a few private donors gave several thousand dollars to buy the Center's first few hundred acres of land so they could begin to cultivate in order to achieve sustainability. They have also built a school that was just launched last month with 38 students and 4 staff. During the summer of last year, Sydney coordinated a trip in which four other UF students and alumni traveled to Tanzania for a few different projects: photography lessons by Sarah Lowe, who graduated in 2006 with a dual degree in Political Science and Spanish (and is now on a Fulbright in Costa Rica); performing a needs assessment for the 300 acres of recently purchased land by Erin Eckhardt, a 2006 graduate student in Agricultural Leadership and Communication; and recording the original songs of the Hananasif children's choir by David Lipps, a 2006 alumnus of Political Science and Philosophy (who is now studying Law and Philosophy at Duke), and Melissa Reyes, a 2006 History and Piano Performance major. They have just released the album, Twakushukuru, and made it available for purchase on their website ([www.hananasif.org](http://www.hananasif.org)).

Sydney is touching a lot of lives.



## Alumni Updates

### 1968

**Harvey Alper** is a lawyer in Altamonte Springs, Florida.

### 1973

**Theresa Horton** received an M.A. in religion from the University of Indiana and went on to law school. She now practices law in Greenville, South Carolina. Along the way she has taught religion classes at a community college and has an abiding interest in Aramaic and Middle Eastern religions.

### 1978

**Fred Chaiken** is a trial lawyer in Atlanta, and has recently become a member of the department's advisory board.

### 1979

**Bruce Turner** is a minister in the United Church of Christ, dividing his ministry between church and hospice work. In 2003 he received a Doctor of Ministry from San Francisco Theological Seminary.

### 1984

**Frank Jones**. Now a colonel in the Air Force, Frank recently returned to the States after two years in Japan. He is now Chief of Air Force Protocol at the Pentagon.

### 1988

**Joe Kight** has taught religion classes in Catholic high schools, served as the Director of Religious Education at the Tulane University Catholic Center, earned an M.A. degree in American History at the University of New Orleans, and now works as an artist in Virginia.

### 1989

**Brain Merry** is one of about fifty Directors of Religious Education working for the Department of the Army. Stationed now at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Brian is a resource for faith groups and advises chaplains on matters of religious education practices.

### 1990

**Scott Erker** followed his religion undergraduate degree with an M.A. in the department and then went on to study in the UF anthropology department where he is working on his dissertation.

### 1992

**Peter J. Stoehr** is an oncology nurse at the University of Virginia Medical Center. He and Kathleen are expecting their third child.

### 1993

**Will Sediff** matriculated to UCLA in Islamic Studies and then entered the advertising industry. He is now in Minneapolis working as Vice President of Innovation and Interactive Marketing for Target Corporation. Will has recently become a member of the department's advisory board.

### 1996

**Louis Reinstein** taught Hebrew Bible and comparative religion in secondary schools before going on to law school.

### 1997

**Chris Cudebec**. Following his service in Albania for the Peace Corps, Chris plans to go to law school and eventually work within the area of social ethics.

### 1997

**Philip Schwadel** received his PhD from the University of North Carolina and is now a professor of the sociology of religion at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

### 2000

**Carolyn Kivler** teaches in a Jacksonville, Florida inner-city school. **Siva Radhakrishnan** has entered post-graduate studies after graduating from the University of Florida medical school.

### 2001

**James Kahn** is attending the Hebrew College Rabbinical School in Boston.

**Ingrid (Bunde) Mattson** is a law clerk in a superior court in Washington State.

### 2002

**Ryan Roberts** is Director of Student Ministries at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Clearwater, Florida.

### 2005

**Mark Kurtzman** is applying to medical school.

# Graduate Student Updates

Just four years ago, the department inaugurated its unique doctoral program with specializations in three distinct areas: Religion in the Americas, Religions of Asia, and Religion and Nature. There are now 29 students in the program with the leading cohort now writing their dissertations. Nearly all of our third and fourth year doctoral students have published articles, presented their work at regional or national professional meetings, and some have earned prestigious national awards. One, Shreena Gandhi, has accepted an elite job offer. This fall Ms. Gandhi will join the faculty of the Religion Department at Kalamazoo College. Here is a list of our current third and fourth year doctoral students, their interests and accomplishments.

## RELIGION IN THE AMERICAS

### Shreena N. Gandhi

(from 2003). Ms. Gandhi received her B.A. in Religion from Swarthmore College and her Masters of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School. She has started work on her dissertation "Translating and Commodifying Yoga: From Transcendentalist Musings to Religious Market Staple." This study combines her research interests in religions of the Americas, Hinduism in the diaspora, the study of material religion, and the relationship between capitalism and religion. She has taught Religion in Latin America and American Religious History for the department. Ms. Gandhi has presented papers nationally at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Latin American Studies Association. Her paper from a Chicago conference on the Study of Religions of India, "Satisfying Ganesh? Milk, Murtis and a Phenomenology of Devotion," will be published in a forthcoming anthology, *Hosting the Immanent Divine: Material Religion in South Asian Traditions*, from SUNY Press. She has also published book reviews in *Material Religion—The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief*, *Sociology of Religion*, and *The International Journal of Hindu Studies*. In the fall of 2007, Miss Gandhi will join the faculty of the Religion Department at Kalamazoo College. [sgandhi@religion.ufl.edu](mailto:sgandhi@religion.ufl.edu)



### Gayle Ann Spiers Lasater

(from 2003). Ms. Lasater received a B.A. in Anthropology with a minor in International Relations at the University of West Florida and an M.A. in Latin American and Caribbean Studies with an emphasis in Sociology from Florida

International University. Her academic interests include religion and politics in the Americas, western monotheism in the Atlantic New World, the interaction of Christian missions in the Americas, and religion and the environment. Ms. Lasater is now writing her dissertation, "Building the Kingdom: Mormon Missionaries and the Americas." She has been a researcher with the Ford Foundation's immigrant religion project, "Latino Immigrants in Florida: Lived Religion, Space, and Power," working with principle investigator and religion department professor Manuel Vasquez. Ms. Lasater has published one article and has three entries in the *Encyclopedia of Christian Civilizations*. She presented a paper at the 2006 Latin American Studies Association Meetings and is presenting at the 2007 American Academy of Religion Meetings in San Diego. She has taught Religion in Latin America and American Religious History for the department, will be teaching Comparative Religions at the University of North Florida this summer, and next year will be teaching in the UF Writing Program. [glasater@ufl.edu](mailto:glasater@ufl.edu)

### Hilit Surowitz

(from 2004). Ms. Surowitz received an undergraduate degree from the University of Florida with a dual major in Religion and Political Science. This was followed with a Fulbright Fellowship to study the religious and social integration of Israel's Ethiopian Jewish community. She subsequently earned a master's degree from the Department of Religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and taught primary and secondary school in both Israel and South Florida. Ms. Surowitz's research interests include Caribbean religion, the Jewish communities of the Caribbean, and diaspora studies. She is particularly interested in the trans-Atlantic social and religious

networks established and maintained by European, North African, and Caribbean Jewish communities and their role in defining community identity. Ms. Surowitz has presented papers nationally at the meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Latin American Studies Association. She is the recipient of a FLAS Fellowship for Latin American Studies, a Gerson Jewish Studies Fellowship from the University of Florida, and a short-term grant for research in Atlantic history from Harvard University. Her article on "The Symbolic Power of Blood-Letting: Picart's *La Circoncision des Juifs Portugais*" is forthcoming. This next year she will be the Morris and Alma Schapiro Fellow at New York City's Center for Jewish History where she will be researching her dissertation, "La Nação: Reconstructing Jewish Identity in the Early Modern Atlantic World." [hilit@ufl.edu](mailto:hilit@ufl.edu)

## RELIGIONS OF ASIA

### Michael J. Gressett

(from 2003). Mr. Gressett graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in Religious Studies and took his master's degree from the University of Florida in South Asian religious traditions with an emphasis in Hinduism. His research interests include Hindu traditions in America and new religious movements in America. He has taught Sanskrit, Religions of India, and Religion in Asia for the department. Mr. Gressett has written a book review for the *Journal of Asian Studies* and presented his work at two regional meetings of the Association for Asian Studies. He also serves as a consultant for religionlink.org. He is now writing his dissertation, "The Cultic Growth of a North Florida Religious Community." [saumya@ufl.edu](mailto:saumya@ufl.edu)

## RELIGION AND NATURE

**Samuel Snyder** (from 2003). Mr. Snyder received an undergraduate degree in philosophy and religious studies from Bucknell University, and a master's degree from Syracuse University with a dual focus on philosophy of religion and religion and nature. He is the current department Graduate Student Representative, and acting American Academy of Religion Student Liaison for the department. His scholarly interests include the study of nature recreation as "lived religious practice" focusing on the role these activities play in environmental conservation. He is also interested in grassroots environmental action, food and sustainability, and understanding the relationships between environmental values and practice. Mr. Snyder has taught Introduction to Religion and Religion, Ethics, and Nature for the department. He has presented papers at two national meetings of the American Academy of Religion. Mr. Snyder is a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* and is currently writing his dissertation, tentatively titled "Casting for Conservation: An Investigation of Beliefs, Attitudes, and Actions toward Nature in Fly Fishing Culture." [ssnyder@religion.ufl.edu](mailto:ssnyder@religion.ufl.edu)

**Gavin Van Horn** (2003). Mr. Van Horn received his undergraduate degree in religion from Pepperdine University and a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary. His primary areas of interest include: animals in religious traditions and myths; contested (sacred) spaces; and environmental history. He has taught Introduc-

tion to Religion and will teach Religion and Nature in North America in the fall for the department. Mr. Van Horn's dissertation research is directed toward understanding the religious, cultural, and ethical values involved in the reintroduction of wolves to the southwestern United States, "Howling about the Land: The Transformation of Wolves from Wild Beasts to Wilderness Icons in the United States." He is a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* and the *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. His other publications include a survey of Hindu traditions and nature in the journal *Worldviews*, an analysis of the pop culture phenomenon the Flying Spaghetti Monster (co-written with Lucas Johnston) in *Golem: Journal of Religion and Monsters*, and a chapter (co-written with Bron Taylor) discussing nature religion and environmentalism in North America in the edited volume *Faith in America*. Mr. Van Horn served as an assistant editor for the groundbreaking *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* and currently serves as the assistant editor of the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*. He has presented papers nationally and internationally, and will be presenting at the 2007 American Academy of Religion national meetings. [gvhornet@yahoo.com](mailto:gvhornet@yahoo.com).

**Lucas Johnston** (from 2004). Mr. Johnston holds an undergraduate degree in psychology from Wake Forest University, where his senior thesis focused on how counter-ontological concepts contribute to memory functions. His M.A. from the Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley) focused on environmental ethics and philosophy of

science. Most recently, Mr. Johnston completed the Graduate Environmental Ethics Program at the University of Georgia, focusing on environmental dispute resolution. He was an invited participant to the Ethics and Sustainability Dialog Group, a think tank comprised of chemical industry leaders and ethicists. Mr. Johnston's dissertation project is a cultural history of the concept of sustainability, and analyzes the evolution of values related to sustainability discourse. Publications include contributions to the *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*, the *Encyclopedia of Environment and Society*, and the journals *Worldviews*, *Ecotheology*, *Golem: Journal of Religion and Monsters*, and *Theology and Science News*. Mr. Johnston has presented his work to national and regional meetings of the American Academy of Religion, the American Anthropological Association and the Environment, the international conference organized by the ISSRNC, and the University of Florida Honors College's courses in Sustainability. He has taught a course on Religion, Nature, and Ethics for the department. Mr. Johnston is currently the Associate Director of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (ISSRNC), and Book Reviews Coordinator for the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*. The title of his dissertation is "The Concept of Sustainability: A Cultural History of a Religious Movement." [lukej@ufl.edu](mailto:lukej@ufl.edu)

## Stay In Touch

The next time you're surfing the web, visit the department web site at [www.religion.ufl.edu](http://www.religion.ufl.edu). It's a great way to keep in touch with what is happening in the department. Also, alumni are encouraged to participate in the department of religion alumni list service. Alumni on this list may post and receive e-mails to and from other alumni and the department. This service is free, and you may unsubscribe anytime you wish. Those of you who responded to our "getting in touch" letter we sent in July are already on this list. For others who wish to subscribe, either send an e-mail to [anewman@religion.ufl.edu](mailto:anewman@religion.ufl.edu) or subscribe yourself directly by sending an e-mail to [alumni-religion-request@clas.ufl.edu](mailto:alumni-religion-request@clas.ufl.edu). In the body of your message, type: subscribe end. We hope you will join us in conversation online!

## New Faculty

We are delighted to announce that **Roman Loimeier** will be joining our faculty next year as a joint appointment with the Center for African Studies. Dr. Loimeier is a well-established scholar in the field of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa. Currently a Research Fellow at Berlin's Centre of Modern Oriental Studies, Dr. Loimeier brings to UF an impressive breadth and depth of knowledge of Islam in general with particular focus on the African context. His expertise within Africa, ranging from the Swahili coast to northern Nigeria, Senegal to Sudan, and beyond, is matched by very few, if any, other scholars. His mastery of Arabic and several African languages is also impressive, and his long list of publications on Islam in Africa clearly shows that he is an influential and outstanding scholar in this field. Given his extensive international connections in Europe, Africa, and the US, Dr. Loimeier will bring immediate visibility to UF in our efforts to develop interdisciplinary study in this important field.



It also gives us great pleasure to announce that **Travis Smith** will be joining our faculty in the fall. Dr. Smith, a scholar of Hinduism and Sanskrit, received his doctorate this year from Columbia University. He has received fellowships from the Ford Foundation and Fulbright-Hays, among others. His dissertation is a critical reading and analysis of medieval Sanskrit texts that glorify the sacred city of Benares. While dramatically expanding our Hinduism and Sanskrit course offerings, Dr. Smith will also be a contributor to the continuing growth and evolution of the Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra) founded just two years ago by Dr. Vasudha Narayanan.



## Alumni Lecture Fund

The Department of Religion hopes to provide students with academic experiences that will offer perspectives on religion's role in our everyday lives. We hope that through an Alumni Lecture Series and other activities both students and alumni will gain insights from some of today's most brilliant minds. These occasions will also offer the opportunity for today's classes to connect with those who came before them.

Please consider a gift to the Department of Religion to support the department's critical educational activities for those following in your footsteps. Please complete the form and return to the address below. Thanks for your support!

*David Hackett, Chair*  
*dhackett@religion.ufl.edu*

Yes! I would like to support the Alumni Lecture Series! (Fund #00767)

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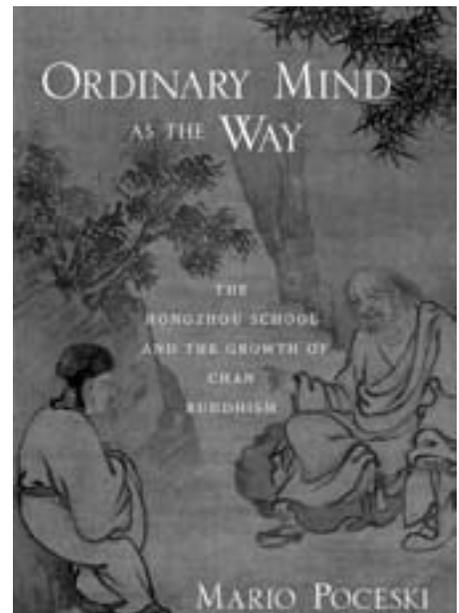
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E-mail: CLAS@uff.ufl.edu

# Recent Publications

## *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism, Oxford, 2007*

This spring Assistant Professor Mario Poceski published a study that, according to one reviewer, promises to be a “bombshell that will reverberate throughout the world of Chan and Zen studies.” In this fresh analysis of the history and doctrines of the Hongzhou School of Chan (Zen) Buddhism in late medieval China, Poceski challenges the traditional and popularly accepted view of the Hongzhou School as a revolutionary movement that rejected mainstream mores and teachings, charting a new path for Chan’s independent growth as a unique Buddhist tradition. This view, he argues, rests on a misreading of key elements of the Hongzhou School’s history. Rather than acting as an unorthodox movement, the Hongzhou School’s success was actually based largely on its ability to mediate tensions between traditionalist and iconoclastic tendencies. Going beyond conventional romanticized interpretations that highlight the radical character of the Hongzhou School, Poceski shows that there was much greater continuity between early and classical Chan-and between the Hongzhou School and the rest of Tang Buddhism-than previously thought.



## *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*

This spring marks the inauguration of the Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture edited by Bron Taylor.

### **Volume 1, March 2007, Contents**

Exploring Religion, Nature and Culture—Introducing the Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture, Bron Taylor..... pp. 5–24

#### **Keynote Presentation:**

Connecting with Creation: The Convergence of Nature, Religion, Science and Culture, Stephen R. Kellert..... pp. 25–37

#### **Forum on Religion, Nature and Culture**

Finding Data: Some Reflections on Ontologies and Normativities, Kocku von Stuckrad.....pp. 39–46

Religion, Nature and Culture: Theorizing the Field, Adrian Ivakhiv ..... pp. 47–57

Opportunity, Challenge and a Definition of Religion, Stewart Elliott Guthrie ..... pp. 58–67

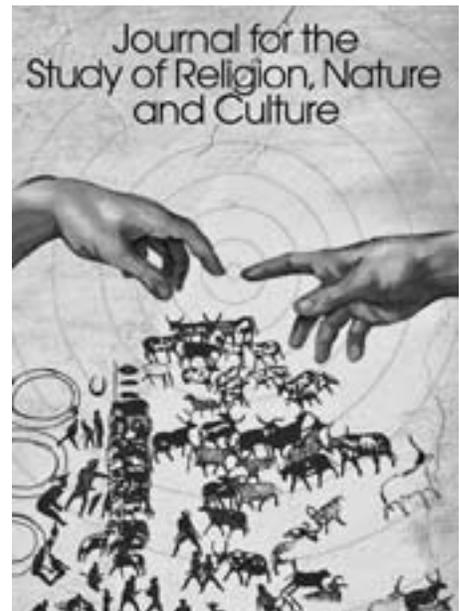
Reflections on Animal Emotions and Beastly Virtues: Appreciating, Honoring and Respecting the Public Passions of Animals, Marc Bekoff..... pp. 68–80

Religious Environmentalism: What it is, Where it’s Heading and Why We Should be Going in the Same Direction, Roger S. Gottlieb..... pp. 81–91

Indigenous Moral Philosophies and Ontologies and their Implications for Sustainable Development, Robin M. Wright ..... pp. 92–108

Re-Uniting with the Kosmos, Penelope S. Bernard ..... pp. 109–128

What if Religions had Ecologies? The Case for Reinhabiting Religious Studies, Sarah McFarland Taylor ..... pp. 129–138



This table of contents, followed by abstracts, is available at: [www.religionandnature.com/journal/JSRNC/JSRNC1.1.pdf](http://www.religionandnature.com/journal/JSRNC/JSRNC1.1.pdf)

Other information about the JSRNC can be found at [www.religionandnature.com/journal](http://www.religionandnature.com/journal)

# Fall Introductory Courses

## **REL 2210 Hebrew Scriptures**

M W 6; F 4, 6, or 7

Robert Kawashima

The history, literature and beliefs of the Israelites from the Biblical text in the light of modern scholarship. (H)

## **REL 2240 New Testament**

T R 6; W 4, 5, or 7

T R 7; F 4, 5, or 7

Leo Sandgren

An introduction to the various literary, social and religious contexts of the books of the New Testament. (H)

## **REL 2317 Religions in Asia**

T R 7; F 3, 5, or 6

Travis Smith

A study of the religious dimensions of human culture, focusing on Asia (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto). (H, N)

## **REL 2341 Intro to Buddhism**

T R 9; F 3, 4, or 6

Mario Pocesi

An introduction to the doctrines, practices, and institutions that shaped the essential identity of Buddhism as a pan-Asian religion that transcended ethnic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. (H)

## **REL 2362 Intro to Islam**

M W 6; F 3, 4, or 6

Zoharah Simmons

A historical introduction to Islamic tradition. The course explores the tradition based on the life of Prophet Muhammad, the text of the Qur'an, and subsequent Islamic expressions. (H, N)

## **REL 2600 Intro to Judaism**

M W F 3

Leah Hochman

A multidisciplinary approach to the Jewish experience from its Biblical origins to modern times. (H, N)

## **REL 2930 Native American Religions**

T R 3; F 3, 5, or 6

Robin Wright

Examines the religious worlds of South, central, and North American native peoples, past and contemporary. (H)

## **REL 2930 Intro to Hindu Culture**

T 7; R 7-8

Vasudha Narayanan

Designed to introduce students to the diverse cultures connected with the Hindu traditions. Discusses philosophy, literature, music and dance, art and architecture, gender issues, social structures, food traditions, and also India's vast popular cultures including Bollywood movies. The readings and lectures will help students be conversant culturally with what can well become one of the largest emerging markets in the next few years. (H, N)

## **SRK 1120 Beginning Sanskrit I**

T R 11-E1

Michael Gressett

This is the first semester of a two-semester course that introduces the Sanskrit language through the Devanagari Script emphasizing reading, writing, grammar and oral recitation.



## **Department of Religion**

*College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

**UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA**

107 Anderson Hall

P.O. Box 117410

Gainesville, FL 32611-7410

Telephone: 352-392-1625

Fax: 352-392-7395

[www.religion.ufl.edu](http://www.religion.ufl.edu)

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