

# 2017 AAR Call for Proposals

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## African Diaspora Religions Unit

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### Call Text:

#### Medicine and Mothering in African Diaspora Religions

In traditions of African and African diaspora religion, healing is very often a central conceptual and ritual element. And medicine is understood in broad terms, encompassing a variety of approaches that seek to address imbalance/malaise that can be spiritual, physical, and/or societal.

Our session will explore the role of mothers (whether of ceremonial or blood lineages) in the healing work of African diaspora religions. Indeed, the feminine divine as “mother” is a vitally important idea in many of the traditions we study. The role of spiritual “mothering” is not limited by cis-gender identities and is embodied by human devotees as well as the sacred energies that humans cultivate and worship.

For a joint session with the Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit: For many indigenous peoples of Africa and America the Atlantic basin has been pivotal to the circulation of religious ideas, technologies, bodies, ritual objects, and sacred knowledges. Our session will, therefore, explore the Atlantic as a central site for the proliferation and even re-imagination of indigenous religious identities, communities, material cultures, and knowledge systems. We encourage papers that examine the relationship between Black and Red Atlantic religious communities and/or that probe the significance of the Atlantic to the formation of particular indigenous communities and their respective religious traditions, practices, and philosophies.

We encourage papers that examine the work of mothering in various forms (including, but not limited to – leadership, counseling, mentoring, instruction, nurturing, initiation, reprimand, material assistance, etc.) in relationship to practices of ritual, pharmacopeic, or societal healing in religions of communities of African descent. Papers that insightfully trouble the categories of “mothering” and “healing” are also welcome.

### Mission Statement:

This Unit endorses the study of African diaspora religions beyond its traditional parameters to include broader geographies, histories, and cultures of people of African descent and the way they shaped the religious landscape, not only in the Caribbean and the Americas, but also in Europe and Asia. This study defines “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 and 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:** 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 - Harding, Rachel E., University of Colorado, Denver, [rachel.harding@ucdenver.edu](mailto:rachel.harding@ucdenver.edu)

## African Religions Unit

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Call Text:

Our Unit encourages critical inquiry about religions originating in Africa as well as all those practiced there. 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 2017 Annual Meeting, we invite paper as well as full panel proposals that respond to the following themes relevant to any region of the African continent (North, West, East, Central, Southern, and the Horn):

- Rites of Passage: Children, Youth, and Adolescents in African Religions and Rituals.  
For this panel we solicit papers exploring the role of children, youth, and adolescents in African religious traditions and ritual contexts, in both historical and contemporary settings. (Co-sponsored with the Childhood Studies and Religion Unit.)
- Decolonizing the Study of Religion in Africa.  
In South Africa and in other parts of the continent, students have recently held mass protests for a decolonization of higher education. Engaging with these movements, we solicit papers addressing the question of decolonization with particular reference to the study of religion in Africa - a field that hitherto is largely defined by Western theoretical and methodological approaches. What does it mean to decolonize this field - its epistemologies, methodologies, scholarly practices, and intellectual traditions - and to think about Africa as a place and space from where new, postcolonial theories of religion can be developed?
- Religion, Vulnerability, and Precarious Life in Africa.  
Engaging with the overall theme of the 2017 Annual Meeting - Religion and the Most Vulnerable - this panel invites papers to explore questions of vulnerability and the precariousness of life, as well as of agency and hope, in relation to religious beliefs, ritual practices, and faith communities in African contexts.

Religion within contemporary African literature (possible co-sponsorship with Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit).

In addition to these panels, we plan to convene a pre-arranged session on Devaka Premawardhana's book, *The Fringes of Faith: Existential Mobility in Everyday Mozambique* (University of Pennsylvania Press 2017).

We encourage the participation of graduate students in our sessions. The chairs of the unit are willing to give feedback on draft papers by graduate students, which then should be sent to them by email at least two weeks before the deadline.



Mission Statement:

The central aim of the African Religions Unit is to address and fulfil 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 Unit's leadership strives to create some balance in the attention paid to these three major traditions.

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

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

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## Afro-American Religious History Unit

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Call Text:

The Afro-American Religious History Unit invites proposals that explore the relationship between religious identity and racial identity in the Americas. For our 2017 annual meeting in Boston, we are especially interested in proposals that engage the following:

- Black, non-protestant religious and sacred traditions in New England and the Northeast, especially Boston, such as The Nation of Islam and Prince Hall Freemasonry.
- The life and legacy of David Walker (1796-1830) and his *Appeal* (1829), including his affiliations with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Prince Hall Freemasonry, Freedom's Journal, and his influence upon Black nationalist and Black radical traditions.
- Black female abolitionism and religious activism in New England, including the work done within and supported by in organizations such as (but not limited to) the African American Female Intelligence Society (Boston, 1831), the Female Anti-Slavery Society (Salem, MA-1832), the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (1833), and the American Anti-Slavery Society (1833), and the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (1835).

- “Black Boston” as a complex geographic locus for generations of early black activism, including its legacy as birthplace and home to numerous prominent activists (e.g., Maria W. Stewart, Phyllis Wheatley, Harriet Tubman, Eliza Ann Gardner, W.E.B. Du Bois, Howard Thurman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and others).
- Explorations of Black historical landmarks (such as Lewis and Harriett Hayden house, African Meetinghouse, Copp’s Hill Burying Ground, Black Heritage Trail, the Underground Railroad, etc.), and their sacred histories in the city, with attention to how they challenge dominant perceptions of Boston’s religious history (for a potential co-sponsored session with the Religion and Cities Unit).
- Examinations of the relationship between (and histories of) hate crimes and black religious groups in the United States (for a potential co-sponsored session with the Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit).
- Papers exploring the intersecting, yet religious ties of slavery, capitalism, and the economy (for a potential co-sponsored session with the Religion and Economy Unit).
- Explorations of relationships between American Religious History and African American religions, particularly through an engagement with new works such as Josef Sorett’s *Spirit in the Dark: A Religious History of Racial Aesthetics* (2016) and Judith Weisenfeld’s *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration* (2017), (for a potential co-sponsored session with the North American Religions Unit).

Successful proposals will clearly identify where the project fits within the Call for Papers, and will speak to its broader implications for African American religious history.

Mission Statement:

The purpose of this Unit is to recover the sources and histories related to the African-American religious experience, to create a forum to explore critically and creatively the history of African-American religions, and to infuse that knowledge into the study of religion within North America. The Unit is committed to the investigation of the diversity of African-American faith traditions and religious experiences.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Martin, Lerone, Washington University, Saint Louis, [lerone.martin@wustl.edu](mailto:lerone.martin@wustl.edu)

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## Animals and Religion Unit

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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. We especially seek proposals on the following topics in 2017:

- Animals from the Margins (in conjunction with the AAR's presidential theme of "Religion and the Most Vulnerable")
- Religion in Animal Institutions (Rescues, Sanctuaries, Slaughterhouses, etc.)
- Proposals for 5 minute presentations on the topic of "Animals, Religion, and Politics" for a lightning presentation & discussion-oriented panel. (Please indicate that your proposal is for this session by starting your title with "5 min Politics Presentation:")
- Animals in the Media (for co-sponsorship with the Religion, Media, and Culture Unit)
- Animals as Religious Agents

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: 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 - Clough, David, University of Chester, [d.clough@chester.ac.uk](mailto:d.clough@chester.ac.uk)

Chair - Ambros, Barbara, University of North Carolina, [bambros@email.unc.edu](mailto:bambros@email.unc.edu)

## Anthropology of Religion Unit

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Call Text:

We invite proposals from the full range of anthropological theories and methods exploring diverse traditions, regions, topics, periods, and encourage standpoints from across the field.

We welcome alternative and creative format sessions that involve presentations other than read manuscripts (including film, multimedia, roundtable, and performance) and sessions that offer enhanced opportunity for dialogue and collaboration among presenters, respondents, and audiences.

We especially encourage individual and panel submissions that address the spirit of this year's theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," such as:

Methodological reflections on anthropologists' negotiations with their own, their study populations', and the broader discipline's vulnerability, and the generative openings that may entail. This might take many forms, including:

- Engagements with Institutional Review Boards (IRB) and competing conceptions of vulnerability.
- Do ethnographers "extract secrets"? If so, can such "secrets" potentially exacerbate precarities? Or shield regimes and dominant representational modes? This is especially pressing in fieldwork with designated vulnerable populations (e.g., refugees, homeless, LGBTQ+ people in non-affirming contexts, incarcerated persons, women negotiating misogyny, children).
- How do ethnographers create and work with pre-existing vulnerabilities?
- How might ethnography entail reciprocities of vulnerability: revealing oneself to participants, being open to new experiences (ritual or otherwise), and/or physical vulnerability? Given the privileges of being in the field as a researcher, can the anthropologist ever be the most vulnerable? Does the concept of "the field" itself enact (or resurrect) vulnerabilities that otherwise may not exist?

Individual and panel submissions might also consider addressing themes such as:

- Can anthropology disrupt, intervene in, or resist structures that create vulnerability and perpetuate categories of the most vulnerable?
- How do multiple infrastructures (religious, social, juridical, etc.) intersect to produce specific kinds of power and disempowerment?
- What vulnerabilities emerge from religious, ethical, and political-legal governmentalities?
- How do individuals and communities mobilize ritual to address conditions and experiences of vulnerability (e.g., calling material blessings, healing, protection, cursing and counter-cursing, Prosperity Gospel, unwitching)?

In addition, we encourage individual submissions for a potential co-sponsorship with the Sociology of Religion Unit. Papers should examine problems encountered or mistakes made in the context of ethnographic fieldwork. Papers should present the context of the research and the specific details of the problem/mistake that arose and how (if it all) they were addressed. Extra time will be allotted to brainstorm further solutions and to think broadly about a "methodology of/for mistakes."

#### 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:

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Chair - Bielo, James, Miami University, [bielojs@miamioh.edu](mailto:bielojs@miamioh.edu)

## Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

The Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit seeks proposals that address a range of interconnections between religious and creative practice and understanding, with a preference for the topics below. We are especially interested in panel proposals and in modes of presentation that go beyond paper reading. Successful proposals will clearly articulate the primary thesis of the presentation and its contribution to the field. Proposals will integrate creative praxis and religion in meaningful ways.

- Art, literature, and religious traditions which directly relate to the New England area at the beginning of colonialism; Boston and New England as a site for religious memory and resistance in literature and art.
- Native Americans and the scandal of colonialism in literature, religion, and art; as well as other forms of colonial identity and trauma, through the lens of literature, religion, and art.
- Art, religion, and literature connected to the “aesthetics” of nationalism; how does art, religion, and literature shape a national identity and create nations within nations.
- Poetry, poetics, and theopoetics; textual and/or artistic representations of the interplay between poetry and religion with a preference for engagement of contemporary poetry.
- Religion within contemporary African literature for a possible joint session with the African Religions Unit.
- We also welcome individual papers and/or panel proposals on any other topic in arts, literature, and religion.

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

Method of submission:  
PAPERS

Leadership:

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Chair - Pierce, Yolanda, Princeton Theological Seminary, [yolanda.pierce@ptsem.edu](mailto:yolanda.pierce@ptsem.edu)

## Arts Series

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Call Text:

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. The AAR would especially like to highlight art and artists of the Annual Meeting locale. 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). 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 of the event, submit the names of those panelists as well.

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 time

Method of submission:  
PAPERS

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

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Call Text:

We welcome individual submissions, as well as pre-organized sessions and panel proposals on the following topics:

- Internment, the Muslim registry, and policing “brown” religion  
Historical, socio-theoretical, philosophical, theological, and practical reflection on the Trump regime’s invocation of Japanese internment as positive precedent for a Muslim registry. Exploration of ways this may be extended to policing and monitoring manifestations of “brown” religiosity more widely, particularly among South, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander communities in the US.
- Religion, refugees, and resettlement  
How might religious and historical reflection on Asian refugees and resettlement in the US shed light on and speak back to rhetoric and policy surrounding the current refugee crisis?
- Asian North American secularities

From the “silent exodus” to the “nones” in APA communities, how do Asian American identities and concerns reflect, challenge, and reconfigure conversations around secularization, secularity, and the (post-) secular? Consideration for possible co-sponsorship with the Secularism and Secularity Unit.

- Asian American political engagement  
Historical, sociological, and religious/theological engagement with APA grassroots and community organizing, AA elected officials and politicians, as well as policy initiatives.
- Comedy and Critique:  
The use of humor, irony, and satire as modes of protest and critique by APA, Muslim American, and similar comedians, artists, and shows.
- Beyond the Binary  
Reflection challenging, reconfiguring, and transforming Black/White binary thinking on race relations in the US, including attention to how generational shifts affect race relations, and how religion operates as a mediating/complicating factor in such discussions.
- Additional topics related to our statement of purpose. Special consideration for diverse methodological approaches and alternative presentation methods.

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:

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Chair - Bundang, Rachel A. R., Schools of the Sacred Heart - SF, [rbundang@alumni.princeton.edu](mailto:rbundang@alumni.princeton.edu)

## Augustine and Augustinianisms Unit

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### Call Text:

Augustine on Exile and Migration.

Augustine spent his early adult life far from his North African homeland. He later cared for refugees who flooded North Africa after the sack of Rome and often wrote—even after returning to his homeland—about how the human mind in life always exists in exile, far from home. As much as he lamented such homelessness, by making it central to his thinking, it may have been the very condition that made it possible for Augustine to imagine new ways of living, writing, and acting. Papers are invited from all disciplines (including history, philosophy, theology, etc.) employing a wide range of methodologies examining all aspects of the experience of migration and exile in Augustine’s life and works.

Discourses of Self-Control in Augustine and/or Rabbinic Jewish Texts (Co-Sponsored Session: AAR Augustine and Augustinianisms and SBL History and Literature of Rabbinic Judaism).

The session will seek to put these two distinct textual bodies in conversation with each other to see how they might shed light on each other. Papers need not be comparative, but rather should engage an aspect of self-control (e.g., refusing temptation) in Augustine or Rabbinic texts. We are interested in papers that explore the extent to which and the nature in which vulnerability persists, and what it means for people to attain self-control, even if only momentarily. Are there activities that may or may not promote self-control? An invited respondent will then help put these papers in conversation with each other. Submissions should be made to SBL History and Literature of Rabbinic Judaism.

### 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 - Drever, Matthew, University of Tulsa, [matthew-drever@utulsa.edu](mailto:matthew-drever@utulsa.edu)

## Baha’i Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

Religion and Public Discourse in an Age of Transition

Scholarship on the role of religion in the public sphere is undergoing a period of transition and flux, influencing disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. For nearly two centuries, the prevalent view has been that religion’s influence on social and political affairs would diminish as the forces of modernity advanced. Articulated as the “theory of secularization,” this view has led scholars to systematically exclude religion as a variable in social analysis. Yet by the late 20th century it had become clear that religion’s influence was not undergoing such rapid decline. To the contrary, it seemed to be resurging in almost every



region of the world. These developments have led to a broad reconsideration of both the role of religion in modern societies and the influence of secularism on the study of social and political life.

It is not yet clear, however, what theories and approaches should alternatively be used. Is every feature of secularization theory invalidated, or only certain propositions? Is there another theoretical framework that we might look to instead, or should we concentrate now on analyzing particular socio-religious dynamics? Furthermore, given the prominent public role that religious actors are currently playing throughout the world, policymakers and practitioners cannot simply wait for scholars to work out their theoretical debates. What resources, then, do they have to think about the constructive and destructive roles that religion plays in the modern world? What strategies and insights can they use to encourage the former and mitigate the latter?

The purpose of this panel is to make a fresh contribution to the growing, inter-disciplinary body of academic literature that addresses these themes by examining the participation of the Baha'i community in the life of society. Several panel presentations will be offered by authors from the forthcoming edited volume, *Religion and Public Discourse in an Age of Transition: Reflections on Baha'i Practice and Thought*. Additional proposals are welcome from scholars working in any discipline and/or tradition who address the themes mentioned above.

#### 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 - Maneck, Susan, Jackson State University, [smaneck@gmail.com](mailto:smaneck@gmail.com)

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

## Bible in Racial, Ethnic, and Indigenous Communities Unit

#### Call Text:

In 2017, the Bible in Racial, Ethnic, and Indigenous Communities Unit will sponsor an invited panel on the role of critical biblical engagement by minoritized and subaltern peoples within both the discipline of Religious Studies and professional societies such as the American Academy of Religion. The panel will also consider the intersectional dimensions of Biblical research; the contested space such work occupies within the disciplinary

landscape of the humanities and social sciences; and the at times fraught conditions under which both biblical studies and the Liberal Arts compete for resources and recognition in the modern academy.

**Mission Statement:**

This interdisciplinary Unit emphasizes traditions of reading and interpreting the Bible in racial, ethnic minority, and indigenous communities. We welcome perspectives utilizing such diverse methodologies as the history of religion, ethnography, literary studies, cultural or social criticism, and postcolonial studies in investigating how the Bible has been used in preaching, storytelling, religious education, transmission of values, and social movements in various historical periods.

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

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

Chair - Page, Hugh Rowland, University of Notre Dame, [hpage@nd.edu](mailto:hpage@nd.edu)

Chair - Bridgeman, Valerie, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, [vjbridgeman@gmail.com](mailto:vjbridgeman@gmail.com)

## Bioethics and Religion Unit

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**Call Text:**

The Bioethics and Religion Unit seeks papers highlighting the intersections of religion, bioethics, and health-related matters. This year, we especially welcome papers related to the conference theme of vulnerability. Prospects for achieving healthy lives can differ markedly depending on social circumstances including social determinants of health such as socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, disability, neighborhood, and more. Among possible topics, we welcome papers that address how unintended consequences of newer technologies (especially those that resequence DNA and even make germline modifications) might underscore existing vulnerabilities or create conditions for new forms of vulnerability.

As a field, bioethics has been dominated primarily by white and western perspectives (religious and secular). For a possible co-sponsored session with one or more other units, we welcome papers concerning any aspect of bioethical theory or practical issues that engage diverse perspectives or a comparative approach. We especially welcome papers addressing the conference theme of vulnerability for the co-sponsored session.

**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 - Randels, George D., University of the Pacific, [grandels@pacific.edu](mailto:grandels@pacific.edu)

Chair - Norling, Marcella, Orange Coast College, [mnorling@cccd.edu](mailto:mnorling@cccd.edu)

## Black Theology Unit

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Call Text:

The Black Theology Unit invites papers on the topics identified below as well as other topics that advance the discipline of black theology. Proposals for individual papers will be given due consideration and we also encourage proposals for prearranged sessions on these or other topics of interest to black theology:

- **Black Theology and Mass Incarceration: Panel with Michelle Alexander**  
In light of Michelle Alexander's groundbreaking book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2010), we invite papers that discuss the ways that black theology contributes to prophetic advocacy and movement building and to a political, moral and spiritual revolution. Michelle Alexander will be a respondent on the panel.
- **Author Meets Critics Panel Session on Josef Sorett's *Spirit in the Dark: A Religious History of Racial Aesthetics* (2016)**  
Specifically seeking submissions from a variety of methodological perspectives (e.g., religion and literature, African American religious history, cultural critique, critical theory, secularism, etc.). Co-sponsored Session with Theology and Religious Reflection Unit.
- **Black Religious Pluralism**  
How do we understand black theologies across faith traditions, spirit-centered and religiously pluralistic black theologies, dialogues between black American and continental African theologies, and African-centered black theologies?
- **Black Mystics and the African American Mystical Tradition**  
Given the fatigue of activists, religious clerics, and political actors in the ongoing struggle for justice, what resources for renewal and transformation can black theological interpreters garner from the life and legacy of Howard Thurman and broader traditions of mysticism, contemplation, and mindfulness practices?

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 diasporan 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 very clear the central thesis and main line(s) of argument of the proposed paper.

Leadership:

Chair - White, Andrea C., Union Theological Seminary, [awhite@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:awhite@uts.columbia.edu)

Chair - Clark, Adam, Xavier University, [clarkadam@xavier.edu](mailto:clarkadam@xavier.edu)

## Body and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

The Body and Religion Unit aims to provide a forum for multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary conversations on issues of body and religion. We are especially interested in the overall question of “What is body?” We invite proposals presenting diverse methodologies and understandings of body, as well as traditional and alternative presentation styles. When reviewing your paper proposals, we particularly appreciate proposals that make their methodological and theoretical frameworks explicit.

This year we are particularly interested in several topics:

- Mary Douglas and Religious Bodies
- Body as Animal
- Carnal Hermeneutics
- Body Boundaries/ Bodies as spaces: body as breaking/testing/pushing boundaries in mysticism and asceticism (for a possible cosponsored session with Mysticism Unit)
- Embodied/kinesthetic dimensions of contemplative practices, including in martial arts and movement awareness practices (for a possible cosponsored session with the Contemplative Studies Unit)
- “Power, Meaning, and Identity: Colonial, Colored, and Gendered Bodies”. Our hope is to interpret the call broadly and tie it in with the annual theme “Religion and the Most Vulnerable”. (for a possible cosponsored session with Religion, Colonialism, and Post Colonialism Unit)

Mission Statement:

This Unit aims to draw together scholars working with different methodologies who address body 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 that can encompass scholars working on a wide range of traditions, regions, and eras.

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/listinfo/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. 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).

- The listserv is moderated. The listserv moderator must approve every message to prevent spam.
- Traffic is low on this listserv.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Pati, George, Valparaiso University, [george.pati@valpo.edu](mailto:george.pati@valpo.edu)

## Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit

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Call Text:

- In honor of the 2017 AAR theme "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," we invite papers exploring Bonhoeffer's life and theology that are attentive to the "view from below", particularly in light of the current American political and social landscape.
- Works putting Bonhoeffer and Paul Ricoeur in conversation are encouraged (Paper proposals will be considered for a co-sponsored session with the Ricoeur Unit. We are especially interested in papers that address Ricoeur and/or Bonhoeffer in relation to this year's conference theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable")
- Pieces examining responses to Nazism by Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich (In this joint session between the Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis and Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Units invite papers which explore religious responses to fascism inspired by the thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich. The papers may explore: 1) the discrete ways these theologians grappled with the issue in their own context(s); 2) theological postures or practices which they offer that may be used in the contemporary context; 3) the use of philosophical, cultural, and/or political criticism to illuminate their theological resistance to fascism; or 4) theological theories of resistance shaped by the particular systems articulated by Bonhoeffer and/or Tillich. While this joint session is envisioned as a papers session proposals for prearranged panels will be considered.
- Other possible session themes include the following: How do we teach Bonhoeffer in these times? What does Bonhoeffer's view of preaching have to say to us during these times? What does the German church struggle teach us? Also, 2017 marks the 80th anniversary of the publication of Discipleship, which makes this an opportune time to explore the book's continuing relevance.

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 - Haynes, Stephen R., Rhodes College, [haynes@rhodes.edu](mailto:haynes@rhodes.edu)

Chair - Hale, Lori Brandt, Augsburg College, [hale@augsburg.edu](mailto:hale@augsburg.edu)

## Buddhism in the West Unit

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Call Text:

This unit invites papers or session proposals on the following (but is open to other possibilities):

- Race, ethnicity, gender, cultural identity, and/or privilege in western Buddhist discourse
- Teaching Buddhism in the West: pedagogy, field site visits, thematic choices
- Buddhist meditation retreats, retreat centers, and/or programs
- Asian-American Buddhisms
- Buddhism and politics in the West
- Buddhist youth, generational shifts
- Buddhism and transnationalism
- Buddhism and secularism
- For a possible co-sponsored session with Bioethics and Religion, papers concerning bioethics theory or practical issues involving Buddhism in the West
- Re-evaluating Japanese Zen as a model for Western Zen (for a possible co-sponsorship with the Japanese Religions Unit)

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 - McMahan, David, Franklin and Marshall College, [dmcman@fandm.edu](mailto:dmcman@fandm.edu)

## Buddhism Unit

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### 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.

This year we are especially interested in sessions that focus on the contributions of Buddhist Studies to methodologies and pedagogies in the study of religion(s) broadly conceived. We are also interested in sessions that examine particular themes and problems relevant to the study of Buddhism across time and space. We welcome proposals for 90-minute or 120-minute sessions, for roundtables, and for sessions featuring pre-distributed papers or utilizing other innovative formats.

Below are some of the themes that our members have proposed for next year. If you are interested in contributing to a proposal on one of these topics, please contact the organizer directly. Proposed sessions and organizers include:

- Practical Canons in Context (Adam Krug, [adam\\_c\\_krug@umail.ucsb.edu](mailto:adam_c_krug@umail.ucsb.edu))
- Building Buddhist Monasteries in Image, Texts, and Material (Gregory Adam Scott, [gregory.scott@ed.ac.uk](mailto:gregory.scott@ed.ac.uk))
- Embodiment, Place, and Landscape (Ivette Vargas-O'Bryan, [ivargas@austincollege.edu](mailto:ivargas@austincollege.edu))
- Teaching Buddhism (Amy Langenberg, [langenap@eckerd.edu](mailto:langenap@eckerd.edu), and Manuel Lopez, [lopezma@uwec.edu](mailto:lopezma@uwec.edu))
- The intersections of LGBT or queer sexualities and subjectivities in Buddhist traditions (Julie Regan, [reganj@lasalle.edu](mailto:reganj@lasalle.edu))
- Works of Ashvaghosha ([roytzo@post.tau.ac.il](mailto:roytzo@post.tau.ac.il)); Buddhism and the Body (William McGrath, [wam6n@virginia.edu](mailto:wam6n@virginia.edu)); and
- Approaches to the Buddhist Councils (Thomas Borchert, [thomas.borchert@uvm.edu](mailto:thomas.borchert@uvm.edu), and Kristin Scheible, [scheiblk@reed.edu](mailto:scheiblk@reed.edu))
- Art, Ritual, and Embodiment (Rae Dachille, [raedachille@email.arizona.edu](mailto:raedachille@email.arizona.edu))
- For a possible co-sponsored session with Bioethics and Religion, we welcome papers concerning any aspect of bioethics theory or practical issue from the perspective of Buddhism, or one that is comparative in nature. Papers addressing the conference theme of vulnerability are especially welcomed (George Randels, [grandels@pacific.edu](mailto:grandels@pacific.edu))

### 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 - Robson, James, Harvard University, [jrobson@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:jrobson@fas.harvard.edu)

## Buddhist Critical—Constructive Reflection Unit

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Call Text:

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.). We invite paper or panel proposals on the following topics (or other topics) as they pertain to our mission to engage in Buddhist critical and constructive reflections:

- hateful speech, constructive speech
- immigration, the “other,” and Islamophobia
- compassionate wrath in world politics
- Buddhist responses to the climate crisis
- Buddhist views of a good life for all
- Buddhism and privilege
- karmic determinism and injustice



- Thich Nhat Hanh and peace work
- post-trauma care.

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 - Brown, Sid, University of the South, [sbrown@sewanee.edu](mailto:sbrown@sewanee.edu)

Chair - Hu, Hsiao-Lan, University of Detroit Mercy, [hhu@udmercy.edu](mailto:hhu@udmercy.edu)

## Buddhist Philosophy Unit

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Call Text:

This Unit entertains individual paper proposals, but mostly encourages thematically integrated sessions. These sessions might focus on specific philosophical topics, on methodological issues, or on (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. There is particular interest in developing a papers session or roundtable proposal that would be suitable for co-sponsorship with another unit. If proposing a session, please provide suggestions for co-sponsorship.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Buddhist philosophy and bioethics
- Buddhist philosophy, critique, and theory (contact: Joy Brennan, at [brennanj@kenyon.edu](mailto:brennanj@kenyon.edu))
- Buddhist philosophy of emotion/affect (contact: John Dunne, at [jdunne@wisc.edu](mailto:jdunne@wisc.edu))
- Buddhist philosophy of devotional practice (contact: Charles Jones, at [jonesc@cua.edu](mailto:jonesc@cua.edu))
- Institutional contexts of Buddhist philosophy (contact: David Fiordalis, at [dfiordal@linfield.edu](mailto:dfiordal@linfield.edu))
- Overlooked and neglected themes in the study of Buddhist philosophy (contact: Catherine Prueitt, at [cprueit@emory.edu](mailto:cprueit@emory.edu))
- Truth (contact: Jay Garfield, at [jgarfield@smith.edu](mailto:jgarfield@smith.edu))
- Vigor (contact: Jonathan Gold, at [jcgold@princeton.edu](mailto:jcgold@princeton.edu))

If a contact person is not listed beside a topic above, persons interested in pursuing a session devoted to that topic should contact one or both of the BPG 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.

**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 - Nance, Richard, Indiana University, [richard.nance@gmail.com](mailto:richard.nance@gmail.com)

Chair - McClintock, Sara L., Emory University, [slmclcli@emory.edu](mailto:slmclcli@emory.edu)

## Childhood Studies and Religion Unit

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**Call Text:**

The Childhood Studies and Religion Unit encourages proposals from scholars of diverse religious traditions and locations who engage in historical, social scientific, humanistic, conceptual, and other methods of research related to children and childhood. For the 2017 meeting, we especially invite proposals engaging the following themes:

- Religious studies perspectives on the history and legacy of boarding/residential schools for Native American, First Nations, Indigenous, and Aboriginal children, including the role of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission or other similar commissions; children and intergenerational trauma; residential school survivors; the role of the Church and Christian missionaries; Indigenous spirituality and healing. Proposals from Native American, First Nations, Indigenous, and Aboriginal scholars are especially encouraged.
- “Religion on the playground,” addressing the importance of peer interactions, the use of religion in play, and the causes and effects of bullying.
- Children, Childhood, and Spirituality - religiosity, secularity and beyond; addressing rights, possibilities, and barriers for spirituality in children’s lives.
- Representations of children in sacred and popular texts, including how those depictions are used by religious groups.

- For this panel we solicit papers exploring the role of children, youth, and adolescents in African religious traditions and ritual contexts, in both historical and contemporary settings. (for a possible joint session with the African Religions Unit).
- Issues surrounding the normative-inspired medical, psychological, mental health, and religious interventions to make the bodies and/or minds of children and young people with disabilities “whole” from a wide variety of religious and methodological perspectives (for a possible joint session with the Religion and Disabilities Studies Unit and the Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit). Please note that papers for this session will be distributed in advance of the Annual Meeting and will be due to the convener no later than November 1.

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.

Go to <http://childhoodreligion.com/> for more details.

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

Method of submission:  
PAPERS

Leadership:  
Chair - Ridgely, Susan, University of Wisconsin-Madison, [susan.ridgely@wisc.edu](mailto:susan.ridgely@wisc.edu)

## Chinese Religions Unit

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Call Text:

All proposals for both panels and papers are welcome and given careful consideration. If you wish to contribute to the following themes, please contact the co-chairs of the Chinese Religions Unit, who will put you in touch with the people proposing the panels:

- Contemporary religious practices in China
- Foreign diaspora and sacred texts
- Chinese religion and print culture

- Islam in China
- Women and religion
- Purity and contamination

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](mailto:suna@kenyon.edu)

Chair - Bryson, Megan, University of Tennessee, [mbryson4@utk.edu](mailto:mbryson4@utk.edu)

## Christian Spirituality Unit

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Call Text:

The Christian Spirituality Unit welcomes proposals in the following areas:

- Spiritualities of the Reformation, in recognition of the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation
- Evangelical spirituality
- Immigration and spirituality
- Contemporary material culture and spirituality
- Consideration of embodiment and lived religion, moving beyond texts in the study of spirituality
- Methodology and self-implication in the study of spirituality

We welcome proposals for both individual panels and papers in these areas.

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.
- Focusing on the retrieval and contemporary assimilation of issues of central interest to the field.

Our AAR sessions and panels are intended to expand dialogue, understanding, research, writing, and teaching in the area of spirituality in general, and of Christian spirituality in particular.

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

Method of submission:  
PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Benefiel, Margaret, Andover Newton Theological School, [mbenefiel@ants.edu](mailto:mbenefiel@ants.edu)

Chair - Young, Glenn, Rockhurst University, [glenn.young@rockhurst.edu](mailto:glenn.young@rockhurst.edu)

## Christian Systematic Theology Unit

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Call Text:

The Christian Systematic Theology Unit invites proposals for individual papers or complete panels related to our theme of Tradition(s). We invite proposals to consider the role and dynamics of tradition in theological authority, disputes over establishing tradition, and consideration/reconsideration of the nature of continuity with tradition. In recognition of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we are especially interested in proposals relating to Reformation, and counter-Reformation/Catholic Reform. However, papers should be constructive or synthetic rather than merely historical or analytical in nature. We especially invite proposals related to the following subthemes:

- Scripture and Tradition
- Protestants and Catholic conversations on authority
- Tradition and traditions
- The nature of the practice of "handing on"
- Written and oral Torah
- Appeals to tradition
- Continuity and discontinuity with received tradition, and the related question of the development of doctrine

- The relationship of doctrinal and cultural traditions

Additionally, to mark the recent publication of the first ever English-language critical edition of Friedrich Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), the Schleiermacher Unit and the Christian Systematic Theology Unit invite paper proposals for a co-sponsored session on Schleiermacher's theology. We welcome proposals for analytical or constructive (but not strictly historical) papers that treat Schleiermacher's work in *Christian Faith*. Potential themes include, but are not limited to: the relationship between piety and doctrine, questions of tradition and authority, and the classical loci of systematic theology. We especially welcome proposals that explore what Schleiermacher's substantive arguments in *Christian Faith* could contribute to contemporary conversations in theology.

**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 during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

Chair - Coolman, Holly Taylor, Providence College, [htc@providence.edu](mailto:htc@providence.edu)

Chair - Johnson, Junius, Baylor University, [junius\\_johnson@baylor.edu](mailto:junius_johnson@baylor.edu)

## Class, Religion, and Theology Unit

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**Call Text:**

Class matters because class involves relationships of power and is not primarily about stratified income levels or particular historical and sociological markers. The conjunction of class and power makes it difficult in the United States to discuss and analyze in both popular and even academic settings. Given the recent presidential election and the emergence of populisms from the left and particularly the right, class will remain an issue for years to come.

We invite papers that will address one or a combination of the following themes and questions:

- Realities and perceptions of class with regard to dominant discourses of power
- Class formation in Trump's America; what is involved in the "making" of a class?
- Theology and religion in the midst of empire, class and empire
- Class formation in the college, university, at the AAR; is academic labor working class labor?
- Class and pedagogy, class diversity in the classroom, teaching about class

We also invite papers for a joint session with the Religion and Disabilities Studies Unit on the complex intersections between disability and class which strengthen, challenge, and complicate religious, moral, social, economic, and political frameworks that affect the vulnerability of people with often co-occurring marginalizations.

We have particular interest in papers that address the following questions:

- When studying embodied concerns and responses to issues affecting vulnerable persons/groups, how do frameworks for class and disability analyses strengthen (challenge, complicate, or trouble) religious, theological, or moral analysis?
- How might class analysis provide a constructive possibility to shift the paradigm in discourses that cast disability, race, religion, sexuality, etc. as separate conversations?
- As social identity categories mutually constitute each other, and construct the meaning of bodies that are productive and those that are failures, what can we gain from intersectional analyses of class, disability, race, and others in religious and theological construction?

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 - Rieger, Joerg, Vanderbilt University, [j.rieger@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:j.rieger@vanderbilt.edu)

Chair - Estey, Ken, Brooklyn College, [kestey@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:kestey@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

## Cognitive Science of Religion Unit

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Call Text:

Current theories and applications of the cognitive science of religion

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 - Chilcott, Travis, Iowa State University, [chilcott@iastate.edu](mailto:chilcott@iastate.edu)

## Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit

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Call Text:

For the 2017 AAR Annual Meeting its theme of Religion and the Most Vulnerable, the Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit seek papers that examine the intersections of religion and violence, with attention to the conditions under which religion lends itself to the justification and/or promotion of violence. Papers should demonstrate comparative or theoretical approaches. Below are our specific calls for 2017:

- **Religion, Media, and Violence**  
Whether it is pop-cultural venues such as Facebook or Twitter, the *Huffington Post*, or traditional televised sources such as MSNBC, Fox News or CNN, the media has made enormous impacts on people's perceptions of religion. How has the media covered the relationship between religion and violence? How has the media affected religiously-motivated violence? What are the ways in which the media has influenced the outbreaks of, or tempering of, religiously-motivated violence?
- **Religion, Fantasy, and Violence: Fantasies**  
Whether imaginative operations, narrative structures, communal illusions, media constructions, or fanciful fictions—abound in human life and culture, and intertwine with religion in ways that invite, necessitate, or mitigate violence. We seek papers to address aspects of this dynamic. How are violent and anti-violent ideologies supported by (or hindered by) fantasy? How does fantasy affect and effect violence (or peace) in religious contexts? What roles does fantasy play in the spread, cessation, or commemoration of religious violence?
- **Religion and Blasphemy**  
Possible co-sponsorship with the SBL program unit on Violence and Representations of Violence. Religious violence is often facilitated by the discursive constructions of "Others". A classic mechanism for constructing Others is the charge of blasphemy, in which the Other is said to have spoken or acted in a way that is deemed sacrilegious. We invite papers that explore charges of blasphemy in religious discourse, particularly those that pay attention to the work that such charges perform in the context of (inter)religious violence, competition, or conflict.
- **Religion and Hate Crimes**  
Possible Co-sponsorship with the Afro-American Religious History Unit. The FBI reported in 2015 a dramatic rise in hate crimes across the United States. Entering into a presidential era of Donald Trump, we invite papers that examine the relationship between hate crimes and black religious groups.



- **Cross-Cultural Manifestations of Islamophobia**  
Possible co-sponsorship with the Contemporary Islam Unit. Muslims have increasingly become targets of hate speech and violent actions worldwide. We seek papers that examine variegated ways in which Islamophobia has manifested in different regional, institutional, and religious contexts (e.g., Burmese Buddhist rhetoric about the Rohingya, Chinese discourse on the Uighur, and U.S. Christian discussions about Syrian and Sudanese Muslim immigrants).
- **Trauma, Harm, and Memory in Japanese Religions**  
Possible co-sponsorship with the Japanese Religions Unit. This panel addresses ways concepts of harm, trauma, and related matters - including violence, damage, recovery, and reconstruction - have taken shape within Japanese religious milieus. We seek a broad range of disciplinary approaches. Papers may address doctrine, literature, institutional history, material religion (such as memorials) and/or ways religious dimensions of Japanese discourse, care initiatives, or other practices may illuminate categories linked to trauma. We seek work on a range of historical periods, and papers that engage broader theoretical inquiry into genealogies of "trauma", "harm", and related concepts are particularly welcome.

**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, uprootedness 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:** 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 with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

**Leadership:**

Chair - Jerryson, Michael, Youngstown State University, [mjerryson@gmail.com](mailto:mjerryson@gmail.com)

Chair - Velji, Jamel, Claremont McKenna College, [jvelji@gmail.com](mailto:jvelji@gmail.com)

## Comparative Religious Ethics Unit

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**Call Text:**

This Unit encourages the submission of any individual paper, papers session, and roundtable proposals that make cultural, religious, and moral diversity central to ethical analysis.

In order to facilitate substantive conversation during each session, we participate in the AAR Full Paper Submission system. Full drafts of all accepted papers must be posted online several weeks prior to the Annual Meeting, and will be accessible to AAR members only. Participants will read all papers in advance, presenters will have ten minutes to summarize their argument, and the meeting time will be devoted to a comments and suggestions on those papers. Themes especially welcome this year include:

- Competing conceptions of the freedom of religion among religious traditions.
- Critiques of authoritarianism and notions of political resistance across cultures.
- Comparison and the anthropology of ethics.
- The influence of religious traditions in contemporary comparative philosophical ethics.
- Comparative forms of moral decision-making and psychology of moral decision-making.
- Establishing a canon of CRE and the value of early predecessors of CRE (e.g., Westermarck, Ladd, Malinowski).
- The religious response to the global refugee crisis.
- Comparative environmental ethics and conceptions of nature.
- Responses to Richard Miller's "Friends and Other Strangers".

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 (in the plural) 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

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Call Text:

We welcome proposals for panels or roundtables for the 2017 AAR meeting on the following themes:

- Comparative Models toward Public Understanding of Religion. Contact: Christopher Parr. [parrch@webster.edu](mailto:parrch@webster.edu)
- On the Possibility of Magic (part II). Contact: Eric D. Mortensen. [ericdmort@yahoo.com](mailto:ericdmort@yahoo.com)
- Religion & Medicine in Comparative Perspective. Contact: Ivette Vargas-O'Bryan. [ivargas@austincollege.edu](mailto:ivargas@austincollege.edu)
- Global Comparison of Hagiography - Roundtable. Contact: Eric D. Mortensen. [ericdmort@yahoo.com](mailto:ericdmort@yahoo.com)
- Ineffability and Mysticism - roundtable or panel. Contact: Tim Knepper. [tim.knepper@drake.edu](mailto:tim.knepper@drake.edu) & Eric D. Mortensen. [ericdmort@yahoo.com](mailto:ericdmort@yahoo.com)

Any other proposals welcome! At this time, we are not considering individual paper proposals. If you are interested in proposing a panel or roundtable for the Comparative Studies in Religion Unit or in conjunction with another unit for co-sponsorship, please do not hesitate to contact Eric D. Mortensen at email: [ericdmort@yahoo.com](mailto:ericdmort@yahoo.com). Thank you! We welcome proposals from graduate students!

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

Leadership:  
Chair - Mortensen, Eric D., Guilford College, [ericdmort@yahoo.com](mailto:ericdmort@yahoo.com)

## Comparative Theology Unit

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### Call Text:

Based on the business meeting, the meeting of our steering committee and suggestions by individual members, we want to elicit proposals concentrated around five themes for next year. We will also list other themes that have been suggested. Please bear in mind that we prefer panel proposals over individual paper proposals, that we want the proposals to be anonymous, and that we appreciate diversity as to gender, ethnicity, subfields, and phase in academic career. We also want to promote collaboration with other program units in the AAR in order to give us an extra (third) session next year. If you are interested in one of the themes but do not know how to collaborate in a panel session, feel free to contact the chairs or use the Comparative Theology Unit listserv to spread your message.

- We call for a panel or papers that engage in an exchange of narratives about foundational events that are shared and contested across Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. We call for a panel that not only exchanges narratives but also asks how our (Jewish, Christian, and Muslim) theologies of the “other” might be challenged and changed through such a process of narrative hospitality. A panel on this theme could be organized in collaboration with the Scriptural Reasoning Unit, the Study of Judaism Unit, or the Study of Islam Unit.
- We call for a panel or papers that explore contemplative practices across religious traditions. It is sometimes said that practices of contemplation give access to “a common ground” that is shared between religions; a realm that lies beyond religious particularities. But is that really the case? What can be learned from attending to and comparing contemplative practices from different traditions (either through study or through participation in different practices). How does this affect our theological reasoning? A panel on this theme could be organized in collaboration with the Contemplative Studies Unit.
- We call for a panel or papers that address theological texts from different traditions that engage in forms of defending the faith (apologetics) or offending other traditions (polemics). What methods are comparative theologians to apply when dealing with texts that offend other religious traditions? What solutions can be found to overcome the forms of violence expressed in such texts or other forms of religiously motivated aggression? Proposals should try to reflect on both historical and contemporary instances of apologetic and polemical texts or other expressions of religiously motivated hate speech.
- We call for a panel or papers that reflect on the legacy and the contemporary significance of Ramanuja (1017-1137 CE) for comparative theology. This panel could be organized in collaboration with the Hinduism Unit or the Hindu-Christian Studies Society or a similar group.

- We call for a panel on the meaning of joy in different theological traditions, and its distinctive characterization vis-à-vis the notion of happiness in religious and secular traditions. This panel could be organized in collaboration with the Templeton Foundation.

Other themes that have been suggested:

- Christianity in Asia
- Comparative theology and the media: finding a common political analysis
- Theistic and Atheistic positions
- Is it possible to give a comparative theological analysis of secular literature?
- Comparative theology and African religions
- Theology of Law and comparative studies
- Religious manifestations of spirit possession and the myth of consciousness

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 until after final acceptance/rejection

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

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

Chair - Moyaert, Marianne, VU University Amsterdam, [m.moyaert@vu.nl](mailto:m.moyaert@vu.nl)

## Confucian Traditions Unit

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### Call Text:

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.

This Unit invites proposals concerning any aspect of Confucianism from any geographical area in any historical field with any methodological orientation. Topics of particular interest this coming year are:

- "Confucianism and Violence" Contact person: Keith Knapp, [knappk@citadel.edu](mailto:knappk@citadel.edu).
- "Teaching Confucianism in K-12 schools in the Sinophone World"
- "Expressions of Emotion in Early Chinese Texts" Contact person: Geoffrey Redmond, [gpredmond@aol.com](mailto:gpredmond@aol.com).
- "The Role of the Scholar ('Ru'), the Academy, and Social Change" Contact person: Pauline Lee, [leepc@slu.edu](mailto:leepc@slu.edu)

Prearranged roundtable and papers session proposals, including those on topics not listed above, have a much better chance of acceptance than individual paper proposals. Panels that are in the traditional two-and-a-half-hour format are welcome, but we also encourage applicants to propose panels in a ninety-minute format. This can take the form of a mini-panel or a symposium on a particular text, author, or pedagogy. Underscoring that Confucianism is not just a Chinese phenomenon, we would also like to encourage people working on Confucian topics outside of China to send in proposals.

### 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, [leepc@slu.edu](mailto:leepc@slu.edu)

Chair - Stalnaker, Aaron, Indiana University, [astalnak@indiana.edu](mailto:astalnak@indiana.edu)

## Contemplative Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

We welcome individual paper, papers session, and roundtable proposals on the following topics:

- Comparative study of contemplative practice, especially the contextual nuances of religiously-committed forms of meditation and contemplative prayer
- Contemplative practice and the creative arts, including dance, music, and poetry
- Contemplation and social engagement, with particular attention to critical race theory, gender studies, peace studies, and social justice issues
- Embodied/kinesthetic dimensions of contemplative practices, including in martial arts and movement awareness practices and/or the subtle body from a cross-cultural perspective (for a possible cosponsored session with the Body and Religion Unit)

We also welcome panel proposals on any other topic related to Contemplative Studies.

### 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. Visit our Website at [www.sandiego.edu/cas/contemplativestudies](http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/contemplativestudies).

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

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### Call Text:

For the 2017 meeting, we welcome proposals on any aspect of Islam in the contemporary world. We are especially interested in presenting research on the following themes:

- Human and non-human vulnerabilities and practices of care
- Muslim resistance, activism, and solidarities
- Shifting political landscapes and Islamic movements
- Cultural production and contemporary Muslim arts
- Law and minoritization (fiqh al-aqaliyyat)
- Science and medical technology, especially questions of body, life, and death
- (For a possible co-sponsored session with the Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit) Muslims have increasingly become targets of hate speech and violent actions worldwide. We seek papers that examine variegated ways in which Islamophobia has manifested in different regional, institutional, and religious contexts (e.g., Burmese Buddhist rhetoric about the Rohingya, Chinese discourse on the Uighur, and U.S. Christian discussions about Syrian and Sudanese Muslim immigrants).

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit, we are interested in proposals that address the representation of Islam and Muslims in public school education, and the role of public schools in a climate of growing Islamophobia.

The Contemporary Islam Unit is committed to supporting inclusion. As a new explicit requirement of our unit, a successful pre-arranged session or panel proposal must incorporate gender diversity. Diversity of ethnicity and rank are also highly encouraged.

Our unit seeks to encourage and facilitate dialogue between panelists before, during, and immediately following individual presentations. To this end, it is essential that presenters commit to providing the full text of their presentation for pre-circulation among panel participants at least three weeks before the conference (i.e., Friday October 27, 2017).

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 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 problems and developments within Muslim societies and Islamic studies during the past 200 years, particularly in the late 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 - Esack, Farid, University of Johannesburg, [fesack@uj.ac.za](mailto:fesack@uj.ac.za)

Chair - Widmann Abraham, Danielle, Ursinus College, [daniellea@gmail.com](mailto:daniellea@gmail.com)

## Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit

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Call Text:

Witch Hunts: Rhetorical, Historical and Contemporary

The term “witch hunt” is used as a rhetorical strategy in contemporary political discourses, and yet there have been and are actual hunts for witches past and present. The Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit invites papers on a variety of topics, using various methodologies, exploring rhetorical, historical, and contemporary “witch hunts.” The following suggested topics are not exclusive:

- The historical persecution of people as “witches,” both in Salem, Massachusetts, other places in the United States, and elsewhere.
- Contemporary persecution of people as “witches” in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Sites of representation or memorialization of witch hunts, for example, Salem, Massachusetts, and Vardo, Norway.
- The mythologizing of witch hunts, witchcraft persecution, and/or negative images of the “witch.”
- The hunt for “witches” as antagonists to the “true” faith or as disruptors of good social order.
- Tensions and contrasts between witchcraft-as-malefic and witchcraft-as-Paganism.

The Pagan-Esoteric Complex: Mapping Intersecting Milieus

Despite the considerable overlaps that exist between contemporary Paganism and Western esotericism, there have been no conscious efforts to bring scholars in these two fields together around intersecting research interests. To amend this situation, the Western Esotericism Unit and the Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit invite papers that deal with one of the following three intersections:

- Intersecting milieus of practitioners (e.g., shared spaces and material cultures, shared practices, overlapping group memberships).
- Intersecting identity discourses (e.g., the formation of identities around tropes such as “magic vs. religion”, “Pagan vs. Christian”, or “tradition vs. modern”).
- Intersecting histories and genealogies (e.g., the roots of esotericism in the mnemohistory of Paganism, and the roots of contemporary Pagan practice in nineteenth-century esotericism).

We are particularly interested in papers that focus on mapping contemporary milieus, but historical and conceptual papers are also welcome.

- Pagan and “pagan” Musics.  
The Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit and the Music and Religion Unit are co-sponsoring a session that would document, compare, and theorize the different uses of the term “Pagan,” to either describe music associated with a set of religious or spiritual cultures and practices or the ways in which “pagan” was used as a term of exoticization of art and popular musics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We welcome a variety of approaches and methodologies. Some suggestions for topics might include: Contemporary Pagan musical traditions and chants, use of music in ritual, Pagan musicians and festivals, or “pagan” as signifier or marketing term for exotic or non-Western musics.

We also welcome submissions on any topic in contemporary Pagan studies outside of these suggested session themes.

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: 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 - Arthur, Shawn, Wake Forest University, [arthursd@wfu.edu](mailto:arthursd@wfu.edu)

Chair - Hale, Amy, Helix Education, [amyhale93@gmail.com](mailto:amyhale93@gmail.com)

## Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

Gurus and Gangstas: Capital, Charisma, and Making the Sacred/Profane

*Kick rhymes without rehearsal, I cross the burnin' sands  
Now I stand here with virtue, of course I could hurt you  
Simply with my point of view, and I knew  
That many would come, that's why I've chosen.*  
-Keith “Guru” Elam

The Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Unit solicits paper and panel proposals that explore the construction of sacred and profane identities in/through/with hip hop culture. Boston is home to one of the most legendary emcees in hip hop, a “rapper’s rapper,” the late Guru of GangStarr. His name meaning

“Gifted Unlimited Rhymes Universal,” his legacy and namesake give attention to the relationship between modes of capital, charisma, and hermeneutics in constructions of the sacred (i.e. Gods/Gurus) and the profane (i.e. “wack”) in hip hop. GangStarr is remembered as presenting a strong dialectic between their sense of self and the construction of competing artists as “wack.” They are by no means alone; among artists, figures such as Kanye West or Lil’ Wayne have (in recent years) played with the boundaries of Sacred and Profane. Take West’s effort to rebrand the confederate flag or his late 2016 celebration of Trump’s victory. Or Wayne’s suggestion that he’s never faced racism in his life and open rejection of the Black Lives Matter movement. What we’ve come to know as hip hop “antics” offer an embodied deconstruction of assumptions about distinctions between this or that, white or black, profane and sacred. These embodiments of the profane and sacred are also rooted in forms of capitalism—they sell, people download, and people pay good dollar to attend concerts of these rap artists. What, then, might be the line between reality, truth, and the sacred/profane within the hip hop cultural continuum?

In the spirit of GangStarr’s constant traveling along the sacred/profane borders, we invite papers and panel proposals that press social scientific approaches to their limits. Possible proposal topics include, but are not limited to:

- Capitalism’s impact on interpretations of the sacred
- Self-Referential “God” talk in Hip Hop
- Defining and quantifying Spirits of Hip Hop
- Modes of Sacralization
- The convergence and influence of economic capital in the promotion of the sacred; in other words, is the religious used merely to “sell records?”
- Underground Hip Hop’s creation of the sacred/profane
- Black bodies in an age of the sacred/profane

Religion and Science Fiction, Sacred Texts and Ethics, and Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion also invite paper (and panel) proposals at the nexus of sacred texts, science fiction, and comic books, and hip hop culture. We invite proposals from a range of disciplinary and methodological approaches.

Hip Hop Studies is growing exponentially every year. Moreover, the subfield of religion and Hip Hop is being taught widely. Therefore, we also invite papers which engage the pedagogical components to “teach” Hip Hop and religion. What are the philosophies, authors, practices, and curriculum one uses to construct a course on and around the subject matter of Hip Hop, religion, theology, and spirituality?

#### 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 - White Hodge, Daniel, North Park University, [dan@whitehodge.com](mailto:dan@whitehodge.com)

## Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit

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Call Text:

The 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.

2017 is the anniversary of several key works in critical theory. CTDR invites proposals on the following works. In each case we expect papers that critically explore the boundaries of a work's disciplinary significance and current utility:

- Max Weber's "Science as a Vocation" (100th anniversary). For possible co-sponsorship with the Secularism & Secularity Unit.
- Recognizing the anniversary of key works in critical theory, papers that explore the boundaries of the disciplinary significance and current utility of: Deleuze & Guattari's *Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (40th and 30th anniversaries of English translations); or, Horkheimer & Adorno's *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (70th anniversary). What have been the effects of these texts on the study of religion, and how can they help us to understand the place of religion in a period of capitalist expansion, inequality, and critique? For possible co-sponsorship with the Religion & Economy Unit.

CTDR additionally invites proposals on the following topics:

- Affect theory and other critical theories of bodies and emotions: a comparative harangue. What is the relationship between affect/emotion, culture, and religion? How does affect theory compare to other approaches to the body in the humanities? How does an attention to specific affects—like rage, passion, or love—shape our analysis of religion and other social formations? For possible co-sponsorship with the Religion, Affect, & Emotion Unit.
- Media conjurations of race, gender, and class during the 2016 presidential election: classifications, naturalizations, and theorizations from alt right rhetoric to the *New York Times* and beyond.

#### 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, legitimation, and the material basis 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 - Walker, David, University of California, Santa Barbara, [dwalker@religion.ucsb.edu](mailto:dwalker@religion.ucsb.edu)

Chair - McCloud, Sean, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, [spmcclo@uncc.edu](mailto:spmcclo@uncc.edu)

## Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit

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#### 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 2017 Annual Meeting, we particularly welcome proposals on the following topics:

- **Religio Ex Machina**  
The simplest machines are devices that transform the direction or magnitude of a force. This roundtable session will examine how machines (e.g., cameras, prayer beads or wheels, computers, televisions, robots, fMRI machines) and understandings of technology have figured into the construction and study of religion. For possible co-sponsorship with the Science, Technology, and Religion Unit.
- **The Cultural History of 'Mysticism'**  
Defining Mysticism: The issue of definitions – both their content and their utility – has resurfaced as a topic of debate in religious studies, and the phenomena embraced by the rubric "mysticism" present an

especially intriguing opportunity for this kind of categorical reflection. Authors are asked to reflect on past, present, and possible new formulations of the category of “mysticism,” including its presumed antitheses, its gendered associations, and its relationship to secular and neoliberal reformulations of the “religious.” We invite papers that consider the question of how “mysticism” has and should be defined, and what the role of a definition of mysticism should be. Papers might propose definitions of mysticism, reflect on past and present engagements with that question, or consider the role of definition itself with regard to mysticism. For possible co-sponsorship with the Mysticism Unit.

- **Genealogy of Genealogies**  
If the so-called genealogical turn in religious studies has demonstrated the historical contingency and pliability of the modern category “religion,” it has done so partly by reifying the term “genealogy.” This session asks us, as scholars of religion, to construct a better cultural history for genealogy, not only by looking to Foucault and Nietzsche, but also to the broader field of meanings that this term accrued during and after the long nineteenth century in relation to Darwinism, nationalism, biblical criticism, etc. We are especially interested in papers that use the history of genealogy to reveal submerged affinities among religion, race, and anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.
- As always, we welcome all papers that develop new archives for and interpretations of the cultural, intellectual, and institutional history of the study of religion.

This Unit 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.

**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 - Scott, J. Barton, University of Toronto, [barton.scott@utoronto.ca](mailto:barton.scott@utoronto.ca)

Chair - Pritchard, Elizabeth Ann, Bowdoin College, [epritch@bowdoin.edu](mailto:epritch@bowdoin.edu)

## Daoist Studies Unit

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**Call Text:**

This Unit welcomes proposals concerning all aspects of Daoism from any period or geographical area. We request group proposals in the form of papers sessions (3-4 papers, presider, respondent) and panel sessions (4-6 panelists) that cohere thematically, methodologically, chronologically, or by some other means. No individual papers as final submissions, please. However, if you have an individual paper and need help connecting with other scholars to form a panel, please contact the co-chairs. We also encourage applicants to propose innovative formats, such as roundtables, that might enable a group study or extensive discussion, and might take advantage of 90-minute sessions. Questions about various formats and innovative possibilities, as well as help in building traditional paper or panel sessions, may be directed to the co-chairs.

At the 2016 DSG business meeting in San Antonio, interest was expressed in forming a session around the topic of impurity. (If interested, contact Jessey J.C. Choo, Rutgers University, [jessey.choo@rutgers.edu](mailto:jessey.choo@rutgers.edu))

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit has been formed as an independent gathering place for the field of Daoist studies and for investigating the religious tradition Daoism and related topics. As we understand it, Daoism is a Chinese religious tradition that has been continually modified and transformed for some two thousand years and is currently in the process of globalization. As here conceived, the field of Daoist studies, historically associated with Sinology, textual study, and Chinese area studies, is now expanding to include other theoretical and methodological approaches — anthropology, archaeology, comparative religious studies, cultural studies, intellectual history, material culture studies, philosophy, sociology, and women’s and gender studies.

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

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

Chair - Valussi, Elena, Loyola University, Chicago, [evalussi@luc.edu](mailto:evalussi@luc.edu)

Chair - Mozina, David, Boston College, [david.mozina@bc.edu](mailto:david.mozina@bc.edu)

## Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit

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**Call Text:**

The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit has issued three calls for papers.

**First Call:**

For 2017, we encourage proposals on any of the following themes: death at the margins or with marginalized groups, particularly including the modern Syrian diaspora; disposal of the body, whether human or animal, and its historical technologies; and, in advance of our 2018 focus on the 50th anniversary of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’s seminal *On Death and Dying*, initial discussion on assisted dying and hospice/palliative care.

**Second Call:**

Playing Dead. Death, Dying and Beyond and Religion and Gaming Issue a Joint Call for Papers in the following areas:

- How do video games (and we interpret games broadly here) interpret death and the afterlife?
- How has the history of gaming shaped contemporary video game notions of death, dying and beyond?
- How do the “lives” of players intersect with religious notions of life, death, and concepts of afterlife?
- In what ways do alternate realities reflect life beyond the grave?
- How, and in what ways, do the rules of games structure alternate conceptions of death, dying and beyond?

- What do games reveal about our religious understanding of life, death, and possible afterlives?

For this joint session, we anticipate a lightning round of seven presentations with five minutes each (for a total of 35 minutes of presentation), followed by an interactive gaming session for panelists/the audience. It is our belief that allowing a participatory experience of the games themselves will facilitate an interactive and fruitful experience for both presenters and the audience alike.

#### Third Call:

The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit and the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit are looking to mount a co-sponsored panel on "Superheroes and Mortality." Specifically, the emphasis for this session would be on the superhero genre (in comic books, film, television, or affiliated media) and issues of mortality, mourning, funeral rites, the hereafter, resurrection, reincarnation, thanatology, and eschatology. Submitters are encouraged to take the theme literally (i.e., we are not asking for figurative "superheroes" nor metaphorical "death"). Topics reaching beyond the English-speaking, U.S. market are especially welcome.

#### 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 - Walsh-Pasulka, Diana, University of North Carolina, Wilmington, [pasulkad@uncw.edu](mailto:pasulkad@uncw.edu)

Chair - Lewis, A. David, MCPHS University, [a.lewis@mcphs.edu](mailto:a.lewis@mcphs.edu)

## Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit

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#### Call Text:

Evangelicals, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and "Traditional Values": A Global Alliance?

The past several years have seen an intensifying discourse regarding "traditional values" among groups of Orthodox Christians worldwide, especially in Russia. Often framed in direct opposition to perceived Western "secularization," the Orthodox appropriation of the term "traditional values" has reverberated globally with a wide range of actors and religious communities, including Evangelical Christians. We invite papers that explore connections and contrasts between Orthodox and Evangelical understandings of the term "traditional values," and the global alliances that the use of this term is forging (or not).

#### Sergii Bulgakov and Modern Western Theology: Panel Discussion

Within the last twenty years, as the work of the Russian theologian, philosopher and economist, Sergii Bulgakov (1871-1944), has gradually become available in English, there has appeared a steady stream of scholarship on and creative theological engagement with his work and the work of his predecessors (Vladimir Solov'ev), contemporaries (Pavel Florensky, Nicholas Berdyaev) and critics (Vladimir Lossky, Georges Florovsky). Recent monographs by Jennifer Newsome Martin (*Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Critical Appropriation of Russian Religious Thought* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2015)) and Brandon Gallaher



(*Freedom and Necessity in Modern Trinitarian Theology* (OUP, 2016)), have emphasized the profound debt and conceptual connections of two giants of modern theology, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Karl Barth, with the work of Bulgakov. In this pre-arranged session, invited panelists will explore Bulgakov's theological legacy and future potential as a dialogue partner for Western Trinitarian theology and Christology through its response to the books of Gallaher and Martin.

Peacemaking and Hospitality in Middle Eastern Christianity: Accommodating Difference in the Eastern Christian Traditions" (co-sponsored with the Middle Eastern Christianity Unit)

Early Christian literature speaks often about peacemaking through recurring concepts such as lovingkindness, forgiveness, hospitality, mercy, philanthropy, and *koinonia*. The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit and Eastern Orthodox Christianity Unit are soliciting paper proposals addressing the ways that Middle Eastern Christians have expressed or promoted harmony in conditions of diversity (such as religious, cultural, or political pluralism). This call for papers invites contributions that approach the theme in its broadest senses, whether it be community building, responding to emergencies, friendship, caregiving, charity, or any other expressions of goodwill across boundaries. Proposals from all academic disciplines and all historic time periods will be strongly considered based on the clarity of thesis, a well-defined body of evidence, and appropriate scholarly methodologies.

Mission Statement:

This Unit focuses on the critical study of the theology, culture, history, and practices of the Eastern Christian churches, 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 - Shevzov, Vera, Smith College, [vshevzov@smith.edu](mailto:vshevzov@smith.edu)

Chair - Gallaher, Brandon, University of Exeter, [b.gallaher@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:b.gallaher@exeter.ac.uk)

## Ecclesial Practices Unit

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Call Text:

Transcending the Human: Theological Ethnography and Materiality

Ethnographies of religion have long paid attention to the material dimensions of religious practice. More recently, ethnographers have also worked with frameworks such as actor network theory, new materialisms and other ways of analyzing material objects and forms of non-human agency as part of religious life. In this call, we are looking for papers that ethnographically engage and analyze any such forms of materiality for ecclesiological and theological purposes.

Papers that seek to engage the complex material struggles of vulnerable populations – for example, but not limited to, struggles wrought by patterns of migration, refugee crises, food and/or water crises, animal welfare, developing technologies or climate change – will be given priority. We are also particularly interested in papers that address the theoretical, theological, and methodological challenges and possibilities inherent to questions of materiality and vulnerability in ethnographic research for ecclesiology and theology.

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 - Idestrom, Jonas, Church of Sweden Research Unit, Uppsala, Sweden,  
[jonas.idestrom@svenskakyrkan.se](mailto:jonas.idestrom@svenskakyrkan.se)

Chair - Wigg-Stevenson, Natalie, University of Toronto, [natalie.wigg@utoronto.ca](mailto:natalie.wigg@utoronto.ca)

## Ecclesiological Investigations Unit

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Call Text:

Church Perspectives on the Legacy of the Reformation

With the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, one session will be devoted to exploring diverse official and theological assessments of various Christian Churches to Martin Luther’s Reformation. Papers are invited to explore views from across the spectrum of Christian churches and traditions and from various global perspectives.

Global Ecclesial Responses to Increasing Extremism and Nationalism

In response to escalating anxieties over refugees, immigration, and globalization, and their perceived threat

to economic prosperity and civic life, there has been an increase in political parties emphasizing nationalist and sometimes racist ideologies in Europe, Asia, Australia, and in the United States. This has incited instances of hate speech and violence against immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and women. Paper proposals are invited to consider the resistance and complicity of churches to these developments in a specific national context.

#### Co-Sponsored Session with World Christianity Unit:

**Rethinking Theology in Light of World Christianities: The Legacy of Robert Schreiter and Stephen Bevans**  
Paper proposals are invited to critically examine the trailblazing contributions of Robert Schreiter and/or Stephen Bevans and their implications for further development in theology. Papers can focus on particular facets of their work, individually or together, such as: on a topic pertaining to the nature, methods, and theoretical resources of contextual theology; on the implications of their work for the advancement of missiology, ecumenism, and interreligious relations; on particular theological issues treated in their works, for example, reconciliation and peace building, or pneumatology; or concentrate on issues in constructing a local theology in a particular context in light of their work.

#### 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

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

#### Leadership:

Chair - Chapman, Mark, Ripon College Cuddesdon, [mark.chapman@rcc.ac.uk](mailto:mark.chapman@rcc.ac.uk)

Chair - Hinze, Bradford E., Fordham University, [bhinze@fordham.edu](mailto:bhinze@fordham.edu)

## Employment Services Workshop Series

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### 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 2017 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>

For an example of a successful proposal, please consult the 2016 Annual Meetings Program Book (pp. 16-17), or consider the language in any of the three workshops featured on this website advertising a set of regional workshops: <http://www.phdlifetransitions.com/>

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

## Ethics Unit

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### Call Text:

The Ethics Unit's purpose is to serve scholars who are interested in exploring the field of ethics and its intersections with other disciplines within the academy. The Ethics Unit serves the AAR by providing an intellectual forum and lively academic exchange on the historical, theoretical, methodological, and theological currents in the field of religious ethics. Most importantly, this Unit is committed to highlighting diverse religious traditions, methodologies, and theoretical perspectives in order to probe the possibilities and limits on the future of religious ethics itself.

Our call for papers focuses on the broad issue of vulnerability and vulnerable populations. In particular, we are interested in papers that explore vulnerable populations in relation to questions of power, revolution, democratic virtues, interreligious perspectives of truth and post-truth, and race relations in the Age of Trump.

- Ethical Assessments and Legacies of Revolution (i.e., 500th Anniversary of Protestant reformation, Civil Rights Movement, 60th Anniversary of Hungarian Revolution, Cuban Revolution, Arab Spring, etc.)
- Civic Virtues and Democratic Citizenship (Questions of Civility, Solidarity, Justice, etc.)
- Ethical dimensions of Truth and Post-Truth: Interreligious Perspectives (focusing on valuations and judgments as well as the relationship of economic and political factors in the pursuit of knowledge)
- American Political Economy and the Politics of Producing Vulnerable Populations (i.e., how social sciences both mark and measure vulnerability and how that informs different religious/moral traditions in ethics) Co-Sponsored with Religion and Social Sciences Unit
- Race Relations in context of Boston (i.e. events, figures, persisting problems that focus on the question of Race) Co-sponsored with Theology of Martin Luther King Jr. Unit

**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 - Day, Keri, Brite Divinity School, [k.day@tcu.edu](mailto:k.day@tcu.edu)

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

## Evangelical Studies Unit

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**Call Text:**

Can Evangelicalism be Saved?

In light of ongoing contestable features of the nature of Evangelicalism, with ongoing dispute over core distinctives and both increasing comfort and discomfort of groups and individuals who have adhered to or

aligned themselves with the term “Evangelical,” the Evangelical Studies Unit wishes to focus its reflection on the definition and description of Evangelicalism. This might include the relationship of Evangelicalism to race, other religions, in global perspectives, and how various academic disciplines (e.g., history, ethnography, and theology) might enable better understandings of the nature of Evangelicalism. Of interest are also questions about Evangelicalism and specific political concerns, including how Evangelicalism has contributed to ongoing social issues, including those of class, race, gender, sexuality, education, planning and development, and the most vulnerable among us. This might also press into questions of other economic factors related to Evangelical institutions and values, which either emerged or operated despite particular theological claims and commitments.

We will hold two sessions, and possibly a third co-sponsorship with the North American Religions Unit on studies of evangelicalism and contemporary politics.

**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)

Other

One session may be prearranged with leading figures addressing the annual themed question.

**Leadership:**

Chair - Bacote, Vincent, Wheaton College, [vincent.bacote@wheaton.edu](mailto:vincent.bacote@wheaton.edu)

Chair - Sexton, Jason, California State University, Fullerton, [jason.s.sexton@gmail.com](mailto:jason.s.sexton@gmail.com)

## Exploratory Sessions

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**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 paper, panel, or other creative type of session format. Exploratory sessions are submitted through the PAPERS system, and must be submitted before March 1, 2017. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by April 1, 2017. Exploratory sessions that are accepted onto the program are then invited to submit an application for new unit status by December 8, 2017.

Method:

PAPERS

Process:

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

## Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit

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Call Text:

For 2017, FTRR will have one independent session, and will co-sponsor two sessions with various Units. For the FTRR independent session, we propose the following CFPs.

Tentative Title: Performance, Precarity, and Disruption

For its 2017 session, FTRR will focus on the performing arts (dance, theater, music, spoken word, etc.) and the ways they offer conceptual resources for advancing feminist interventions related to vulnerability and precarity. Questions that papers and performances might address include the following:

- How does performance, working at the intersections of late capitalism and social space, draw attention to the vulnerability of materiality, bodily becoming, relational entanglements, and religious practices?
- How can the performing arts engage with our ecological homes as we unsettle not only ourselves with our ecological destruction, but also biodiversity writ large?
- Evoking a theoretical lineage of precarity (e.g., Dorothy Day's notion of poverty and precarity [1952] and Judith Butler's *Precarious Life* [2003] and *Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Politics* [2000]), is performance our best intervention in engaging precarity?
- How does performance function as protest? As feminist Intervention?

For our co-sponsorships, FTRR is considering the following:

A joint session with the Lesbian Feminisms Unit.

Joint session with the Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit and the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit: "Reading Mary Daly in Contemporary Times"

The Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit, the Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit, and the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit are co-sponsoring a panel on the work of Mary Daly, and its relevance to feminist critiques of religion in the 21st century. This coincides with the publication of *The Mary Daly Reader* (ed. Jennifer Rycenga and Linda Barufaldi; NYU Press); the co-editors will be present as respondents. Possible themes include Daly's significance given the resurgence of explicit sexism, racism, and nationalism in world politics; how and why debates concerning Daly's thought on issues of race, transgender identity, and separatism, can now be assessed historically; responses of young feminists and womanists to rediscovering Daly's work; Daly's transformative yet simultaneously tempestuous impact on the field of women and religion; lesbian identity as an ideological more than embodied position in the 21st century, and

the relevance of Daly's legacy for new challenges of androcentricism that take into account a wider "animal-human" framework. Both paper proposals and nominations for a panel presentation will be considered.

A co-sponsorship with the Queer Studies in Religion and the Religion and Sexuality Units

Author-Meets-Critics panel for Nikki Young's recent book *Black Queer Ethics, Family, and Philosophical Imagination* (Palgrave, 2016) (<http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137584984>).

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 - White, Carol, Bucknell University, [cwhite@bucknell.edu](mailto:cwhite@bucknell.edu)

Chair - Keller, Mary, University of Wyoming, [mkeller@uwyo.edu](mailto:mkeller@uwyo.edu)

## Film Series

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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 time

Method of Submission:

PAPERS



## Gay Men and Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

The Gay Men in Religion Unit presents our 2017 Call for Papers that addresses the following questions/themes:

#### Gay Male Religious Experiences and Public/Private Lives

The notion of vulnerability among gay men is changing in the era of the dating app. What kinds of vulnerability are constructive (queerness as a gift) and which are destructive? How have gay/MSM dating apps affected experiences/practices of embodiment? Does the representation of religious identities on gay dating apps increase or decrease vulnerability? Does cyberspace enable new kinds of engagement (engagement)? How can religious doctrines and practices (incarnation and the (virtual) body of Christ, detachment and alleviation of suffering, etc.) reconceive gay male vulnerability?

In the U.S. and other Western countries gay clubs/bars/other gathering spaces are closing and LGBT churches are shrinking. Is there a correlation between the disappearance of religious and secular gay spaces, or are they separate phenomena? What explains these developments (e.g., the success of online dating apps or growing inclusiveness of churches)? What are the effects (e.g., decrease of visibility of, and sense of community among, (religious) LGBTs)? [possible co-sponsorship with Religion and Cities Unit]

#### Gay Theologies and Activism

In the aftermath of Brexit and the rise of Trump, we want to examine the intersections of religion, gay male identities, and activism. Further, we invite examination of white gay male support for Trump and the roles of homonationalism and racism. Are there new moral frames or epistemic changes in language and concepts that we may use in response to homonationalism and racism in gay communities? Is there a prophetic call for gay men to “Act Up” again? What role might gay theologies play in responding to these events?

Given that Trump will have the opportunity to nominate at least one potential Supreme Court justice, will have a Republican controlled Congress, and can roll back President Obama’s Executive Orders, there may be a very different legal and political landscape for LGBT relationships. We invite papers that examine the role of theology in response to Trump/Pence’s anti-LGBTQ stances, particularly in relation to gay marriage. This is a continuation of 2016’s “Did We Win?” conversation that examined the Obergefell decision and its meanings for LGBTQI relationships. (co-sponsored with Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion)

#### Author Meets Critics

We invite paper proposals that examine Heather R. White’s *Reforming Sodom: Protestants and the Rise of Gay Rights* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015)

#### Broader Theoretical Questions

We seek papers that address the general terrain and most urgent questions in the broad field of research on gay men and religion. We welcome papers that propose new directions in research in this area.

#### 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; and,
- 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 - Sneed, Roger A., Furman University, [roger.sneed@furman.edu](mailto:roger.sneed@furman.edu)

Chair - Derks, Marco, Utrecht University, [marcoderks@hotmail.com](mailto:marcoderks@hotmail.com)

## Graduate Student Committee

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Call Text:

The AAR's Graduate Student Committee solicits papers and/or workshop presentations for its 2017 Special Topics Forum (STF), entitled "Religious Scholars as Humanitarians: Publications, Pedagogies, and the Protection of the Most Vulnerable."

Please note: Your proposal for this professional development panel does not count against your two-submission limit in AAR's PAPERS system!

The purpose of this STF is to debate the ethical obligations that religious studies scholars owe to the most vulnerable members of global society, particularly in the wake of the 2016 US presidential election. It will provide a safe space in which junior scholars can explore how they might develop their academic careers while simultaneously making meaningful contributions to the pursuit of social justice.

We are particularly interested in understanding how the humanitarian aspects of the religion scholar's vocation can be expressed through creative publication programs, and innovative approaches to pedagogy. However, we would also be delighted to consider non-traditional approaches (e.g. digital engagement, artistic work, etc.) to the nexus of humanitarian and scholarly work.

Applicants are encouraged to create proposals that may be delivered as 15 to 20-minute workshop presentations. The GSC's hope is that STF attendees can leave this session with several concrete ideas about how to relate their academic identities to their service work.

Please submit your finished proposals by e-mail to the STF Chair and GSC Western Region representative Chase L. Way ([chase.laurelle.way@gmail.com](mailto:chase.laurelle.way@gmail.com)); please cc GSC Chair and AAR Student Director, Bhakti Mamtora ([bhaktim@ufl.edu](mailto:bhaktim@ufl.edu)) on this note. In addition, please feel welcome to contact Ms. Way with any questions you have about this call. She would be more than happy to speak with you about your ideas!

Method:  
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)

Process:

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

## Graduate Student Committee Art Show

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Call Text:

The Graduate Student Committee invites AAR participants to submit their creative expressions for our Art Show, to be exhibited during the AAR Convention on November 17-20, 2017 in conjunction with the Special Topics Forum.

We are looking for all kinds of creative artistic works that express the 2017 AAR theme of Religion and the Most Vulnerable. Any technique and medium is welcome (photography, painting, charcoal, mixed media, sculpture, watercolor, drawing, etc). Poetry (printed and framed) is also welcome.

Submitted pieces must be able to hang from the wall in a reasonably sized area, (i.e., no grand scale pieces, which cover an entire wall). Freestanding sculpture must be submitted with pedestal, if required.

Each individual may submit up to 3 pieces. There is no fee to submit.

Please send a photo of each artwork, a short description and your CV to Francisca Ireland-Verwoerd at [ffiv@bu.edu](mailto:ffiv@bu.edu) and cc GSC Chair and Student Director Bhakti Mamtora at [bhaktim@ufl.edu](mailto:bhaktim@ufl.edu).

The creative work, ready to hang or stand, must be brought to the art gallery space on Friday November 17, 2017 to be included in the show. The gallery closes on Monday, November 20, 2017 at 6 pm, after which you must retrieve your work.

The show will be juried by the Graduate Student Committee.

Method:

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

Process:

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

## Hinduism Unit

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Call Text:

For questions about the specific panels topics listed below, please contact the proposers through the emails provided. As always, proposals on other topics are also very welcome.

The Hinduism Unit is open to ALL submissions (from ancient to modern, from textual to ethnographic, from India to diaspora, etc.). However, proposals will be judged not only on their scholarly merits, but also on their ability to engage AAR attendees with the study of Hinduism. Panel topics that will draw only a select group of specialists are better reserved for other conferences. In order to expand the present study of Hinduism at the AAR, we encourage submissions to consider the best ways to attract audiences to our panels. This means bridging across sub-disciplines through co-sponsorships, posing theoretical or pedagogical questions that

apply broadly to AAR attendees, and thinking with scholars in other sub-fields to gain multiple perspectives to a given issue.

The deadline for submissions via the AAR's PAPERS system is TBA. At that time, we will accept only proposals for complete sessions, not stand-alone papers; we also encourage co-sponsored sessions. A standard AAR session has 5-6 participants: 3-4 paper presenters, a discussant or respondent, and a presider (150 minutes total). Current AAR policy mandates that one of our three allotted sessions be a shorter session of 5 participants, typically consisting of 3 paper presenters, a discussant, and a presider (90 minutes total). Please specify your preferred format in your submission. Again, if you are looking for others to organize a papers session, please feel free to reach out to colleagues on the RISA listserv.

- Non-Indians & Hinduism: conversion, passing, and performance (Amanda Lucia, [amanda.lucia@ucr.edu](mailto:amanda.lucia@ucr.edu))
- Aesthetics and ethics of Hindu devotion (Patton Burchett, [peburchett@wm.edu](mailto:peburchett@wm.edu))
- Aesthetics of politics in the Hindu tradition (Shubha Pathak, [pathak@american.edu](mailto:pathak@american.edu))
- Anchoring truths: use and deployment of the Veda (Steven Lindquist, [slindqui@smu.edu](mailto:slindqui@smu.edu))
- Yoga, science, & the occult (Patton Burchett, [peburchett@wm.edu](mailto:peburchett@wm.edu))
- Alternative Utopias: Ashrams, Publics, and Intentional Communities (Tim Dobe, [dobetimo@grinnell.edu](mailto:dobetimo@grinnell.edu))
- Writing the Self: South Asian Autobiographies (Tim Dobe, [dobetimo@grinnell.edu](mailto:dobetimo@grinnell.edu))
- Gandhian afterlives (Tim Dobe, [dobetimo@grinnell.edu](mailto:dobetimo@grinnell.edu))
- Astrology in south Asian religions (Patton Burchett, [peburchett@wm.edu](mailto:peburchett@wm.edu))
- Regulating and representing Hindus in the US (Amanda Lucia, [amanda.lucia@ucr.edu](mailto:amanda.lucia@ucr.edu))
- Non-violence: Hinduism and beyond (Tim Dobe, [dobetimo@grinnell.edu](mailto:dobetimo@grinnell.edu))
- Persecuted majorities/persecuted minorities: Hindu perspectives (Amanda Lucia, [amanda.lucia@ucr.edu](mailto:amanda.lucia@ucr.edu))
- Still Sanskrit? Redefining the role of traditional training in teaching modernity (Amanda Lucia, [amanda.lucia@ucr.edu](mailto:amanda.lucia@ucr.edu))
- Female gurus revisited (Karen Pechilis, [kpechili@drew.edu](mailto:kpechili@drew.edu))
- Ramanuja 1000th year anniversary (Gopal Gupta, [ggupta@fgcu.edu](mailto:ggupta@fgcu.edu))
- Hindu Deaths: rituals, relationships, rebirths (Amy Allocco, [aallocco@elon.edu](mailto:aallocco@elon.edu))
- The relationship between Philosophy and Religious Practice (Michael Allen, [msa2b@eservices.virginia.edu](mailto:msa2b@eservices.virginia.edu))
- Female authority and ritual leadership (Nanette Spina, [spinan@uga.edu](mailto:spinan@uga.edu))

Pre-conference Roundtable: "Teaching Tales: Narrative and Pedagogy in the Hinduism Classroom"  
Friday, November 17, 2017, 3:30pm – 6:00pm

- 6 presenters
- 20 minutes each
- 30 minutes for discussion (Raj Balkaran, [raj.balkaran@gmail.com](mailto:raj.balkaran@gmail.com))

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 - Dobe, Timothy, Grinnell College, [dobetimo@grinnell.edu](mailto:dobetimo@grinnell.edu)

Chair - Lucia, Amanda, University of California, Riverside, [amanda.lucia@ucr.edu](mailto:amanda.lucia@ucr.edu)

## History of Christianity Unit

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Call Text:

The mission of this program 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. The History of Christianity program unit continues to encourage chronological depth and geographic breadth in the study of Christian histories.

- Luther's Nineteenth-Century Heirs and Interpreters to be co-sponsored by the Nineteenth Century Theology Program Unit.  
We seek papers that investigate Luther's theological legacy in the nineteenth century by examining how his ideas were appropriated or critiqued by important nineteenth-century religious thinkers, including ones outside of northern Europe. We are particularly interested in proposals that engage, from a variety of geographical and epistemological vantage points, with essays in the following volume: Matthew L. Becker, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).
- Exegetical Uses and Abuses of Christianity in Preaching, Politics, and Popular Culture to be co-sponsored with Religion and Popular Culture.  
Public expressions and manifestations of Christianity history present through Christian history in vivid and contested ways. This session seeks to forefront the public performances of Christianity and their historicizing power. For example how did indigenous African prophets enlist, subvert, or confirm 19th century Christian colonialism? In contemporary North American politics, what is the role of competing

factions and coalitions across the Christian historical spectrum? We envision particular studies of one period which can point to earlier analogous moments and invite broad dialogue.

- **The Long Reformation and the Global South.**  
In conversation with global recognition of the 500th anniversary of the European Protestant Reformation, we seek papers that integrate the expanded interpretation of the legacy of the Protestant Reformation as it appears throughout the global South. We hope for methodological diversity of approaches to the long view of reforming movements that began in the 16th century.
- **The Subaltern and the History of Global Christianity**  
In celebration of the diverse approaches to telling the story of Christianity across and within multiple perspectives, a renewed emphasis on writing history from the ground up, from the margins in, from the non-normative geographical centers (the volumes of the Commission for the Study of the History of the Church in Latin America-CEHILA, the Fortress Press Peoples' History of Christianity, etc.), and from within a genre of popular general reading has emerged. (Butler, Bass, Chidester, Gonzalez, etc.) This session explores the benefits and hazards to such approaches, comparing content, breadth, and methodological diversity of these histories.
- **History of Christianity as a History of Refugees**  
The history of Christianity might best be told as the story of migrations and refugees. Pre-modern migrations, modern North American sites such as Boston, and contemporary global migrations all offer insight into peoples' movements through new geographical and metaphorical spaces.
- **From Augustine of Hippo: A Biography to "Augustine of Hiphop": Late Antiquity in Modern Scholarship and Postmodern Interpretation.**  
The 50th anniversary of Peter Brown's magisterial biography of St. Augustine invites a consideration of comparative academic and popular study and interpretation of the North African theologian Augustine of Hippo.
- **Early Christianity and Material Culture.**
- **Indigenous Christian Conversions and Roots in New England, New France, and New Spain.**
- **Reproduction, Parenting, and Sexuality in Christianity across Time.**
- **The History of Christianity in Religious Studies and Divinity Schools: Creative Tensions and Collaborations.**
- We also continue to invite papers on topics and periods not explicitly mentioned in this Call.

**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, St. Olaf College, [beckman@stolaf.edu](mailto:beckman@stolaf.edu)

Chair - Ramirez, Daniel, Claremont Graduate University, [daniel.ramirez@cgu.edu](mailto:daniel.ramirez@cgu.edu)

## Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Unit

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Call Text:

Human Enhancement: Views from the Underside.

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 of 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 greater confidence in nanotechnology, cognitive science, moral bioenhancements, genetics, robotics, and information technology to achieve enhanced human capacities or extend the human lifespan.

In view of the 2017 AAR theme ("Religion and the Most Vulnerable"), we are particularly interested in papers that engage perspectives from the social margins. We welcome examinations of what it means to be human and of the role of human vulnerability in deliberations about enhancement usage.

We are also calling for proposals for a co-sponsored session:

The Religion Sport, and Play Unit and the Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Unit invite proposals for papers for a possible joint session that explores the complex intersection of sport/play and the use of various technologies to make the bodies of athletes, players, and gamers even "better." Original work that probes the social, political, moral, and religious dimensions of the sport and play/enhancement interface is especially encouraged.

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 - Trothen, Tracy J., Queen's University, Kingston, [trothent@queensu.ca](mailto:trothent@queensu.ca)

Chair - Cole-Turner, Ronald S., Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, [coleturn@pts.edu](mailto:coleturn@pts.edu)

## Indian and Chinese Religions Compared Unit

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Call Text:

We are seeking papers that explore and explain commentarial strategies, i.e., the techniques and strategies used by commentators in the Indian and/or Chinese traditions. The focus can be a single commentary (or part thereof), or a genre, or even a comparative study of how different commentators in the same or different traditions handle material. Note that papers are not required to compare Indian and Chinese materials explicitly (though such papers are welcome); affinities, comparisons, and contrasts will emerge during discussion of the papers.

Mission Statement:

This Unit addresses two significant gaps in the current scholarship on Chinese and Indian religious traditions. The first gap is on 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. 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 - Allen, Michael, University of Virginia, [msa2b@virginia.edu](mailto:msa2b@virginia.edu)

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



## Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit

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### Call Text:

We welcome paper and panel proposals particularly relating to any of the following four different panels:

- For a joint session with the African Diaspora Religions Unit: For many indigenous peoples of Africa and America the Atlantic basin has been pivotal to the circulation of religious ideas, technologies, bodies, ritual objects, and sacred knowledges. Our session will, therefore, explore the Atlantic as a central site for the proliferation and even re-imagination of indigenous religious identities, communities, material cultures, and knowledge systems. We encourage papers that examine the relationship between Black and Red Atlantic religious communities and/or that probe the significance of the Atlantic to the formation of particular indigenous communities and their respective religious traditions, practices, and philosophies.
- For a joint session with Native Traditions in the Americas Unit: While indigenous communities are often seen as necessarily connected to rural spaces and places, urban centers have also historically been central locales for the development and persistence of indigenous religious traditions. We invite proposals that examine the role of religion in urban indigenous communities both past and present. Moreover, while our discussion will not be limited to indigenous communities in the New England area, we welcome papers that engage religious indigeneity in Boston and the surrounding region. We also encourage papers that examine how the practice of these religious traditions in urban spaces and places challenge constructions of indigeneity.
- For a joint session between Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit and the Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, we invite proposals that address issues related to the Most Vulnerable in our global society in the context of indigenous medicine(s) and healing. We ask that proposals address the socio-political context of the topic, as well as theoretical and analytical framework(s). We plan to co-sponsor the session with pre-distribute full papers (full papers due online Nov 1, 2017), brief presentation of each paper, and facilitated discussion.
- For a special session with the Law, Religion, and Culture Unit, the Religion and Ecology Unit, and the Native Traditions in the Americas Unit: When the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed suit in U.S. District Court against the Army Corps of Engineers in July 2016, they argued that the Dakota Access Pipeline "threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe." We seek paper or panel proposals for a co-sponsored session on the intersections of law, ecology, and Native American traditions.

### 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. 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, [gabriel.estrada@csulb.edu](mailto:gabriel.estrada@csulb.edu)

Chair - Alles, Gregory D., McDaniel College, [galles@mcdaniel.edu](mailto:galles@mcdaniel.edu)

## International Development and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

The International Development and Religion Unit invites proposals for individual papers and panels that address the intersection of international development and religion, broadly conceived. For the 2017 Annual Meeting, where the Presidential theme is "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," we especially invite proposals engaging the following:

- Risk in Faith-Based development. Who or what is vulnerable and how?
- Imagination. How can we think about/theorize the role of imagination at the intersection of religion and international development?
- Locality and positioning. How should we think about the local and positioning as they relate to religion, development, and/or issues of vulnerability?

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 social sciences and humanities. While this is true for many of the social sciences and humanities; religious and theological studies are two silos that until recently 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, practioner-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 theme for the Routledge Research in Religion and Development book series. (See <http://ow.ly/FGEJb>)

Leadership:

Chair - Duncanson-Hales, Christopher, University of Sudbury, [theolog3n1@gmail.com](mailto:theolog3n1@gmail.com)

Chair - DeTemple, Jill, Southern Methodist University, [detemple@smu.edu](mailto:detemple@smu.edu)

## Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit

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Call Text:

The Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit invites paper and panel proposals that critically examine modes of response to religious pluralism from multiple disciplinary perspectives. We welcome proposals that are interdisciplinary, incorporate alternative pedagogies of presentation, make use of new media, and reflect the dialogical nature of this field.

In particular, this year we invite papers in the following areas:

- A co-sponsored call with the Religion, Holocaust and Genocide unit as well as the Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace unit  
Since the 2016 Presidential election, the United States has witnessed a precipitous increase in hate incidents. While historical analogies are imperfect, scholars of the Holocaust and genocide are starting to see unsettling trends in popular and political discourse reminiscent of trends in authoritarian and fascist societies. The language and culture of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are important sites for scholarly inquiry. Papers in this panel will focus on the intersections of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (1) to explore how classical tropes of religious bigotry are being re-oriented to a new political context; (2) to develop new language and methodologies that offer critical perspectives on religious bigotry and violence; (3) to explore innovative interreligious strategies for addressing religious bigotry, and (4) to explore how besieged religious communities can work together to preserve and protect the dignity and integrity of all people.
- A panel of white men?  
What is the relationship between Whiteness and interreligious studies? How can this emerging field be particularly attentive to the intersection of race and religion when it comes to various models of interreligious engagement? As this field emerges, who is or is not at the table? To what extent does interreligious studies participate in the production of vulnerable populations?
- Models for teaching religion  
Do religious studies and interreligious studies offer different methodologies or models for the study of religions? In what ways do these represent competing or complementary paradigms? How is this conversation influenced by the relationship between classroom teaching and co-curricular initiatives? Papers might explore the challenges and opportunities implicit in empirical/experiential; emic/etic; insider/outsider; scholar/practitioner; and other postures that inform models of teaching religion in the Academy.

- Interreligious resources for addressing climate change  
What interreligious resources (theological and practical) are being employed in the discourse around and responses to climate change? How has this issue created new or “unlikely” interreligious alliances? To what extent are indigenous practices and systems of thought foregrounded in this work?

Mission Statement:

This Unit creates a space for critical interdisciplinary engagement with interfaith and interreligious studies, which examines the many modes of response to the reality of religious pluralism (theological, philosophical, historical, scriptural, ethical, praxological, and institutional). This Unit will:

- Expand and enrich the modalities of interreligious and interfaith discourse in a diverse set of academic disciplines that have grappled with religious pluralism
- Give voice to what has already been happening for years at the cutting-edge of institutional and pedagogical innovation and at the intersection of the academy and civic engagement in many disciplines

Our intention is that this Unit will encourage the rigorous analysis necessary to establish the contours of this emerging field. A crucial first step involves systematic attention to common terminology (interfaith, interreligious, engaged pluralism, multifaith, multireligious) and the intersection of these terms with the disciplinary approaches that are increasingly using this language (interfaith just peacemaking, comparative theology, and scriptural reasoning). Similarly, we will encourage critical analysis of both national and international interfaith organizational models and other praxis-oriented responses to religious pluralism.

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 - Ziad, Homyra, Institute for Islamic, Christian and Jewish Studies, [hziad@icjs.org](mailto:hziad@icjs.org)

Chair - Peace, Jennifer Howe, Andover Newton Theological School, [jpeace@ants.edu](mailto:jpeace@ants.edu)

## Islam, Gender, Women Unit

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Call Text:

WORKSHOP SESSION:

In 2017 IGW will conduct a workshop session that explores research methodologies in the study of women and gender in relation to Islam and Muslim contexts. Our objective is to invite critical reflection on the particular methodological concerns, challenges, and responsibilities of conducting research in the field. In keeping with our commitment to non-traditional programming, the session will be organized as a workshop, with pre-circulated readings (made available for advance reading on the AAR website in fall 2017) and themed discussion tables formed around those 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 an article or chapter length piece of their writing that

has already been published or otherwise completed/drafted in full to serve as a basis for one table's discussion at the session.

Papers should have an identifiable method that can serve as the basis for broader discussion, but need not engage questions of method exclusively or directly. Some possible discussion topics that the papers will help us to examine are: new/emerging methodological directions (historical, textual, ethnographic, theological, etc.); analysis of manuscripts and other pre-modern texts; digital scholarship as it has shaped the study of Islam and gender; interdisciplinarity; normativity; the researcher's ethical responsibilities; the relationship/position of scholars to their sources, archives, and conversation partners; the role of deconstruction and critique; questions concerning access and consent; approaches to material and visual culture; and methods that move beyond the gender binary.

Proposals to IGW for this session should:

- include an abstract of the piece
- explain clearly how the piece relates to the suggested themes of the call
- indicate the length of the full piece
- indicate its status in the publishing process (if published, details; if under review, where; draft, etc.) and whether it forms part of a larger project
- suggest possible facilitators for discussion of the pieces at the workshop

Note: After reviewing proposals, IGW will request from finalists the full text of papers/articles in early March 2017 before making final selections. Though only work that can be circulated for review is eligible, authors will be able to revise the text before it is posted on the AAR website for participants in September 2017.

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. Such proposals should indicate why the work matters for the themes under consideration and what qualifies you to facilitate such a discussion. Should such a proposal be accepted, we would then also encourage the author to attend and participate in the session.

After final selection of the texts, themed tables will be announced broadly, and facilitators for each table will be solicited. Workshop attendees will be asked to sign up for the themed table at which they will participate and will have advance access to the designated text beginning in September 2017.

#### JOINT-SPONSORED SESSION:

This year a joint-sponsored session with the Men, Masculinities, and Religions (MMR) and Religion in Europe (RiE) units will examine: Islamophobia, the body, and gendered/racialized policies of the state from a transnational perspective (including, but not limited to, European perspectives). As opposed to a traditional paper/panel setup, the session will be formed around a set of very short (6-7 minute) initial provocations/remarks that will serve as the foundation for subsequent discussion by session attendees seated at small discussion tables.

Therefore, for this joint-sponsored session, IGW, MMR, and RiE are not accepting proposals for standard full-length conference papers or for prearranged paper panels. Rather, we solicit proposals for short remarks that will serve as the basis for small group discussions.

Possible topics for proposals include: state surveillance of Muslim communities; state policies in relation to gender binarization; gendered/sexualized practices of detention or torture; the production and circulation of images/representations of Muslim men as terrorists; headscarf/hijab/burkini controversies and legislation; gendered/sexualized hate crimes in the broader public; the mainstreaming of alt-right and white nationalist political movements and discourses; Muslim vulnerability or acquiescence to, negotiations with, and/or resistance to such discourses and practices; methodologies within the study of Islam, gender/race, the body, and the state; and methodologies for studying the intersections between Islamophobia, gender, femininity, and masculinity. Since this session is co-sponsored by the Religion in Europe unit, proposals addressing European contexts are encouraged.

#### MENTORING SESSION:

In our third year as a program unit we will again conduct a co-sponsored mentoring/networking session (in cooperation with the other Islam-related units) for those who study Islam and Muslims. We particularly invite the participation of those who study gender and women in relation to Islam and Muslim contexts. Program unit leadership will organize this session; IGW is not accepting paper/panel proposals for it.

#### 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: Other (please explain below)

Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs \*and\* steering committee members prior to final acceptance or rejection. This is a necessary feature of our review process, since we select promising proposals and review full papers (in draft form) prior to making our final selections. For the deliberation process among chairs and steering committee members to select proposals, we have decided to make each other's comments visible to one another in order to encourage conversation amongst us about the proposals and their merits.

#### Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Howe, Justine, Case Western Reserve University, [justine.howe@case.edu](mailto:justine.howe@case.edu)

Chair - Hidayatullah, Aysha, University of San Francisco, [ahidayatullah@usfca.edu](mailto:ahidayatullah@usfca.edu)

## Islamic Mysticism Unit

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Call Text:

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, 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.

The Islamic Mysticism Unit solicits paper and panel proposals for the 2017 AAR Annual Meeting. While all proposals related to Islamic mysticism are welcome, special consideration will be given to the following topics formulated at the 2016 AAR Islamic Mysticism Unit business meeting:

- Aesthetic expressions of Islamic mysticism
- Sufism and the post-colonial state
- Islamic mysticism in Africa and Asia
- Islamic mysticism in the digital age

Also welcome would be papers and panels that thoughtfully incorporate the theme for the 2017 Annual Meeting: "Religion and the Most Vulnerable."

As a new 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.

If your proposal gets accepted and you agree to be on the program, we expect you to show up to participate at 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 previous annual meeting from the program for the following two years.

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 - Rozehnal, Robert, Lehigh University, [ror2@lehigh.edu](mailto:ror2@lehigh.edu)

Chair - Nguyen, Martin, Fairfield University, [alakhira@gmail.com](mailto:alakhira@gmail.com)

## Jain Studies Unit

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Call Text:

The Jain Studies Steering Committee, in consultation with other interested scholars, has decided on the following topics as possible themes for its one session and/or co-sponsored sessions in 2017:

- Regional Development and the Study of Jains (contact Gregory Clines, [gregoryclines@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:gregoryclines@fas.harvard.edu))
- Jain Tantra (contact Ellen Gough, [emgough@gmail.com](mailto:emgough@gmail.com))
- Bioethics from Jain Perspectives (contact Whitney Braun, [wbraun@llu.edu](mailto:wbraun@llu.edu))

We also welcome proposals for complete pre-formed paper sessions, with four papers and a respondent. The steering committee prefers to see proposals for pre-formed sessions, and strongly discourages submission of individual paper proposals.

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

Chair - Owen, Lisa, University of North Texas, [lowen@unt.edu](mailto:lowen@unt.edu)

## Japanese Religions Unit

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Call Text:

We invite papers sessions, individual papers and roundtables in all aspects of Japanese religious practice and thought, both historical and contemporary. To facilitate greater 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.). We also strongly encourage you to consider balance in terms of gender, and areas of specialization and time periods, as well as balance between graduate students, junior scholars, and senior scholars. 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 [lmclaug2@ncsu.edu](mailto:lmclaug2@ncsu.edu)). Next year's Annual Meeting theme is Religion and the Most Vulnerable. Also, below are possible topics proposed by our members this year. But we welcome proposals on other topics as well.

Possible Topics (if you are interested in any of these, please contact the individuals listed above):

- Religion and disabilities in Japan: Mark Bookman, [bookman@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:bookman@sas.upenn.edu).
- Tenrikyō: Adam Lyons, [alyons4@gmail.com](mailto:alyons4@gmail.com)
- "Author meets critics" session on Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (Oxford Press, 2016): Barbara Ambros, [bambros@email.unc.edu](mailto:bambros@email.unc.edu)
- "Funeral Buddhism": Mark Blum, [mblum@berkeley.edu](mailto:mblum@berkeley.edu)
- New religions/popular religions/self-cultivation: Orion Klautau, [orion@m.tohoku.ac.jp](mailto:orion@m.tohoku.ac.jp)
- Japanese religions and xenophobia: Kuni Terasawa, [kunihiko.terasawa@wartburg.edu](mailto:kunihiko.terasawa@wartburg.edu)
- Narrative in premodern Japanese religions: Byran Lowe, [bryan.lowe@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:bryan.lowe@vanderbilt.edu); Chris Callahan, [ctc@illinois.edu](mailto:ctc@illinois.edu); and Sujung Kim, [sujungkim@depauw.edu](mailto:sujungkim@depauw.edu)
- Tantra in Japan, possibly a review of Bernard Faure's new series on the Gods of Medieval Japan: Richard Payne, [rkpayne1@mac.com](mailto:rkpayne1@mac.com)
- Bioethics and Japanese religion (for a possible co-sponsored session with Bioethics and Religion, we welcome papers concerning any aspect of bioethics theory or practical issue from the perspective of Japanese religion, or one that is comparative in nature. Papers addressing the conference theme of vulnerability are especially welcomed): George Randels, [grandels@pacific.edu](mailto:grandels@pacific.edu)
- Re-evaluating Japanese Zen as a model for Western Zen (a potential joint session with Buddhism in the West): Stuart Lachs, [slachs@att.net](mailto:slachs@att.net)
- A roundtable on "liberal trends in Shintō": Jolyon Thomas, [jolyon@upenn.edu](mailto:jolyon@upenn.edu); and Fabio Rambelli, [rambelli@eastasian.ucsb.edu](mailto:rambelli@eastasian.ucsb.edu)
- A panel on Trauma, Harm, and Memory in Japanese Religions (possibly co-sponsored by the Japanese Religions Unit and Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit). This panel addresses ways concepts of harm, trauma, and related matters - including violence, damage, recovery, and reconstruction - have taken shape within Japanese religious milieus. We seek a broad range of disciplinary approaches. Papers may address doctrine, literature, institutional history, material religion (such as memorials) and/or ways religious dimensions of Japanese discourse, care initiatives, or other

practices may illuminate categories linked to trauma. We seek work on a range of historical periods, and papers that engage broader theoretical inquiry into genealogies of "trauma," "harm," and related concepts are particularly welcome: Levi McLaughlin, [lmclaug2@ncsu.edu](mailto:lmclaug2@ncsu.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

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**Call Text:**

Kierkegaard and the Future of Revelation

The 2016 presidential election in the U.S. has left many people shocked, saddened, even despondent. The results seem to announce that the idea of America—the possibility of, indeed the potentiality for, a democracy that can flourish spiritually, morally, culturally, politically, and economically, precisely because of its diverse people—has been occluded. Kierkegaard provides insight into this despondency, as he broadens the issue into something more pressing: the meaning of human being and the dynamics of faith at its heart.

In various works, Kierkegaard insists that faith and single individuality are not given naturally, but must come historically into existence by means of revelation. The person who is, by birth and circumstance, the immediate self is not the authentic self that one can become in the moment of faith—a moment of intense passion, reflection, and action that subsumes and transforms the immediate self. Christianity, too, Kierkegaard is clear, is thus never given naturally. It too has a history; it too has come—it too must continually be brought—into existence. The result is the fear and trembling attached to the terrifying prospect that, because revelation comes into existence, it can go out of existence—unless it is willed and practiced by the faithful single individual.

What, then, is the future of revelation—the future of Kierkegaard? We welcome papers that address Kierkegaard, revelation, and crisis/historicity (the uncertainty of the future). Does Kierkegaard's ability to help his readers to respond to their present age—and its future—have a future?

**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 - Robinson, Marcia C., Syracuse University, [mrobin03@syr.edu](mailto:mrobin03@syr.edu)

Chair - Kulak, Avron, York University, [akulak@yorku.ca](mailto:akulak@yorku.ca)

## Korean Religions Unit

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Call Text:

The Korean Religions Unit of the AAR invites you to submit proposals for individual papers, paper panels, or roundtable panels.

Any proposal relating to Korea and religion will be considered, but particular consideration will be given to proposals addressing the themes listed below.

Overarching Topic: Religion Crossing Borders

Subtopics (tying also into the Presidential Theme of Religion and the Most Vulnerable):

- Religion and Minorities (racial, social, sexual, etc.) in Korea
- Religion and Migration in Korea
- Migrant Workers, Immigrants, and Religion in Korea
- Populism, Xenophobia, Racism, Provincialism: Constructive Religious Responses (How might religion overcome mass rage, mass nationalism, etc.?)
- Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Korean Religions

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 - McBride, Richard D., Brigham Young University, Hawaii, [rick\\_mcbride17@hotmail.com](mailto:rick_mcbride17@hotmail.com)

Chair - Torrey, Debernieri, University of Utah, [djtorrey@gmail.com](mailto:djtorrey@gmail.com)

## Law, Religion, and Culture Unit

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Call Text:

As ever, the Law, Religion, and Culture Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtable panel proposals, including author-meets-reader 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:

- The number of people forced to leave their homes by war, conflict, or persecution is now the highest ever recorded. 1 in 131 persons is counted as "displaced" and living as a refugee, within or outside the boundaries of their home country, according to the Global Trends Report issued by the UN Refugee Agency, the UNHCR. Disputes over border security, immigration control, and national identity are pushing xenophobic politics to the fore around the world. We seek proposals that explore the role of law in struggles over religion, migration, and immigration.
- For a possible quad-sponsorship with the Religion and Ecology Unit, the Native Traditions in the Americas Unit, and the Native American Religious Traditions Unit:  
When the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed suit in U.S. District Court against the Army Corps of Engineers in July 2016, they argued that the Dakota Access Pipeline "threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe." We seek paper or panel proposals for a co-sponsored session on the intersections of law, ecology, and Native American traditions.
- For a possible co-sponsorship with the Religious Conversions Unit, we invite proposals that reflect on social, religious, legal, and governmental legitimization processes, or, who gets to decide if/when a conversion is "legitimate" or "real."

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 - Amesbury, Richard, University of Zurich, [richard.amesbury@sozethik.uzh.ch](mailto:richard.amesbury@sozethik.uzh.ch)

## Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

Joint session with the Gay Men and Religion Unit: "Gay Theologies and Activism"

Given that Trump will have the opportunity to nominate at least one potential Supreme Court justice, will have a Republican controlled Congress, and can roll back President Obama's Executive Orders, there may be a very different legal and political landscape for LGBTQ relationships. We invite papers that examine the role of theology in response to Trump/Pence's anti-LGBTQ stances, particularly in relation to gay marriage. This is a continuation of 2016's "Did We Win?" conversation that examined the Obergefell decision and its meanings for LGBTQ relationships. (co-sponsored with Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion and Gay Men and Religion units)

Joint session with the Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit and the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit: "Reading Mary Daly in Contemporary Times"

The Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit, the Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit, and the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit are co-sponsoring a panel on the work of Mary Daly, and its relevance to feminist critiques of religion in the 21st century. This coincides with the publication of *The Mary Daly Reader* (ed. Jennifer Rycenga and Linda Barufaldi; NYU Press); the co-editors will be present as respondents. Possible themes include Daly's significance given the resurgence of explicit sexism, racism, and nationalism in world politics; how and why debates concerning Daly's thought on issues of race, transgender identity, and separatism, can now be assessed historically; responses of young feminists and womanists to rediscovering Daly's work; Daly's transformative yet simultaneously tempestuous impact on the field of women and religion; lesbian identity as an ideological more than embodied position in the 21st century, and the relevance of Daly's legacy for new challenges of androcentricism that take into account a wider "animal-human" framework. Both paper proposals and nominations for a panel presentation will be considered.

Paper session for Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit: "The Lesbian as a Space for Revolution in Communities, Organizations, and Politics"

The Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit seeks papers that challenge, among other topics, the role and space of lesbians in communities, organizations, and politics. We wish to explore the many intersections of lesbian and/or feminist identities, with particular attention to how shared common ground as well as areas of dissonance. What does the contested space of lesbian contribute under the LGBTQ umbrella? How does the LGBTQ community and/or feminist theologies benefit or challenge the idea of lesbian? How does the space of lesbian contribute to revolutionary politics and practice? What are the roles of lesbian allies? How do lesbian identities intersect with gender identities, and how do these intersections come to bear on our shared experiences?

Note: We've been asked to co-sponsor a film screening and audience Q&A, entitled: *FORGING VOICE – Feminist Pedagogy, Theopoetics, and Film*. We have accepted this co-sponsorship from Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit.

Mission Statement:

For over twenty-five years, this Unit has employed feminist perspectives to explore the multiple dimensions of lesbian interaction with religion, providing one of the few consistent academic settings where discussions on lesbian issues in religion and feminist perspectives on lesbian issues take place. 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. Along with the obvious concern for both historical and contemporary issues pertaining to gender and sexuality, a longstanding feature of the scholarship of this Unit has been analysis of race/class/postcolonial critiques. The Unit handles important, diverse, and timely themes, providing a theoretical space for probing and further developing the openings and opportunities afforded by changing sociopolitical and theoretical contexts.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Other

Leadership:

Chair - Milligan, Amy, Old Dominion University, [amymilligan12@gmail.com](mailto:amymilligan12@gmail.com)

## Liberal Theologies Unit

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Call Text:

We seek paper or panel proposals that engage both liberal theologies and “post-truth” politics. While we welcome varied points of entry into this question, we are particularly interested in papers which assess liberal epistemologies’ promise -- or lack thereof – for engaging contemporary political rhetoric. Although “post-truth” is a term with considerable currency in the United States, we by no means mean to limit our inquiry to that context, nor do we mean to forestall criticisms of the term “post-truth” itself. As always, we welcome both normative and descriptive scholarship, both spirited defenses and polemical critiques of liberal theologies, and studies of both classical western liberalism and its analogues in other cultural traditions.

All proposals will be evaluated according the following criteria: 1) clarity of thesis and argument; 2) explicit and creative engagement with liberal theologies, broadly understood; 3) relevance to the pressing concerns of both the academy and the world; 4) fit with the call for papers, and with other proposals received. Since this call for papers continues a conversation begun in our 2016 session, selected presenters will be provided with those papers and invited to see their own contributions as deepening that discussion. Selected presenters are also asked to provide a full manuscript for pre-circulation to other speakers by mid-October of 2017.

Mission Statement:

Liberal theology in all its varieties has been a robust intellectual and religious presence from the early modern period to the present. The theologians involved with this Unit, who come from many different universities and religious schools in North America and from abroad, are committed to continuing this tradition. Our focus is plural — we look across religious traditions. It is interdisciplinary — we welcome the participation, among others, of historians, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and philosophers engaged with questions of vital moment to liberal theologies. Our gaze is to the future — we are determined to develop new perspectives, new ways of speaking, and new combinations of ideas that will better address the intellectual and social circumstances in which we find ourselves.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership

Chair - Morice Brubaker, Sarah, Phillips Theological Seminary, [sarah.morice.brubaker@ptstulsa.edu](mailto:sarah.morice.brubaker@ptstulsa.edu)

## Liberation Theologies Unit

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Call Text:

The Liberation Theologies Unit calls for proposals that move forward theological, theoretical, and political understandings of “identity” or of specific identities; their historical, sociological, theological, or embodied basis; or their relation to contemporary instantiations and mechanizations of power (e.g., engagements with the 2016 political campaigns, advertising/marketing, media narratives, economics, biopower, incarceration, respectability politics, music, social media, social movements, resistance communities, liberationist pedagogies, and so on).

We welcome proposals that address the concept, rhetoric, history, and problematics demarcated by the term “identity” in contemporary discourse, just as we welcome proposals that take up particular identities in contemporary or historical forms. Some identities that may be of interest might include racial, economic, colonial, sexual, or gender identities and/or those such as: white working class; undocumented; illegal; Christian; Muslim; American; religious fundamentalist; leftist; conservative; political elite; the rich, poor, or middle class; the oppressed; 99%; millennials; socialist, capitalist, etc.; black, white, or brown; politician; terrorist; any of the painful terms fabricated to denigrate any social group, and so on and so on...

The Liberation Theologies Unit encourages crossover dialogue—between contexts, disciplines, and religions—and reflection on the implications of liberationist discourse for the transformation of theology as a whole, both its methods and substance. We welcome proposals arising out of, or engaging all religious or ritual traditions including, but certainly not limited to: indigenous religions, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, traditional African religions and Buddhism. We encourage broad interpretation of the terms of the call and creative, constructive proposals for liberation theologies in the 21st century.

For a co-sponsored session with the Religion, Social Conflict and Peace Unit, the Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit, and the Liberation Theologies Unit, a session prompted by the 2016 Presidential election, since which the United States has witnessed an unsettling increase in hate incidents. While historical analogies are imperfect, scholars of the Holocaust and genocide are starting to see unsettling trends in popular and political discourse reminiscent of trends in authoritarian and fascist societies. The language and culture of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are important sites for scholarly inquiry, and this panel seeks papers addressing the intersections of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (1) to explore how classical tropes of religious bigotry are being re-oriented to a new political context; (2) to develop new language and methodologies that offer critical perspectives on religious bigotry and violence; (3) to explore innovative interreligious strategies for addressing religious bigotry, and (4) to explore how besieged religious communities can work together to preserve and protect the dignity and integrity of all people.

For a joint panel with Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction Unit

The Liberation Theologies Unit and Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction Unit call for paper or panel proposals for a co-sponsored session specifically working with sacred texts, theory, and theology in contemporary liberation and social justice movements. We especially welcome proposals that think about the role of sacred texts with respect to the water protectors at Standing Rock or the contemporary use of

theology and sacred texts in #BlackLivesMatter or other liberation movements around the globe. For instance: the role of sacred texts in water protectors' resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline, specifically, or in their modeling of a mode of existence/activity that resists corporate capitalism, its legacies, or its environmental effects more generally or theoretically.

Broadly defined, by “texts” we mean anything ranging from the discipline of Biblical Studies through scriptural analysis to anything that can be "read" or "interpreted" visually, orally, literarily, etc. We also encourage a broad understanding of theological construction that thinks from, alongside, or in the wake of social justice movements. What texts motivate liberation? What creative theological transformation happens in the textual space of social justice movements? How are new texts created, and what are some new "sacred texts" emerging from these movements?

For a possible joint panel with Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society and Black Theology Units

Papers for a possible joint session with the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit, Liberation Theologies Unit, and the Religion and Disability Studies Unit on the various ways in which bodies are used to communicate, interpret, and theologize -- to tell stories drawn from signing the body -- in African American and other cultures, including the use of Black American Sign Language, a distinct variant of ASL that arose from the experiences of Black Deaf people in segregated schools for the deaf.

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 - Slabodsky, Santiago H., Hofstra University, [santiago.slabodsky@hofstra.edu](mailto:santiago.slabodsky@hofstra.edu)

Chair - Hofheinz, Hannah, [hlh848@mail.harvard.edu](mailto:hlh848@mail.harvard.edu)

## Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit

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Call Text:

Reformation: Repentance and Resistance

The Protestant Reformation movement was set in motion with a document, the 95 theses, that opens with a call to repentance and is followed by claims of how to resist the most powerful institutional force of the time. With the understanding of grace as a gift, and liberty as the response to it, repentance took the shape of resistance to the luring effects of the ordering of life in different dimensions. In the household and the economy, in politics and the church, forces of oppression, domination, marginalization, and exclusion were identified, named, and condemned. In connection with the remembrance of the emergence of the Reformation movements, the Martin Luther and the Global Lutheran Traditions Unit invites scholars to submit proposals that identify the present significance of repentance and the different dimensions that resistance takes as expression of this repentance. We welcome proposals that explore themes connecting the



Reformation and Luther scholarship with theological treatment of the reasons and forms for repentance and resistance in the present reality. Papers addressing the reformation urgencies of our day - similar in pertinence as were those of the Reformation days – could focus on issues, among others, pertaining to migration, race and gender violence, imperialism, poverty, renewed forms of colonialism, political populism, hate talk, etc.

The musical legacy of the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wife Coretta Scott King, and the uses of music in the Civil Rights Movement, fits well with the conference theme. We are also interested in ways that we can connect Coretta Scott King's graduation from Boston's New England Conservatory of Music with a Mus.B in voice, and her presence in Boston resulting in her union with Martin Luther King. Coretta King and others (like Bernice Johnson Reagon and the SNCC Singers) used music to fund the Civil Rights Movement (Coretta gave concerts to raise money for the SCLC). Papers or pre-arranged panels will be considered. Co-sponsored by the Music and Religion Unit.

**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 - Westhelle, Vitor, Lutheran School of Theology, [vwesthel@lstc.edu](mailto:vwesthel@lstc.edu)

Chair - Stjerna, Kirsi, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, [kstjerna@plts.edu](mailto:kstjerna@plts.edu)

## Men, Masculinities, and Religions Unit

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**Call Text:**

The Men, Masculinities, and Religions Unit invites proposals for a session on the theme, “Men, Masculinities and Religions: Non-Christian, Non-White Explorations.” We especially encourage proposals exploring the religious and gendered identities of non-White and non-Christian men whose masculinity has largely been ignored by scholars of gender and religion; constructions and representations of non-Christian and non-White masculinities in all their diversity (e.g., non-binary, Trans, and heterosexual perspectives); the vulnerability of non-White and non-Christian men to discrimination and oppression, or to exclusion from the dominant scholarly conversations about religion and gender; and proposals featuring innovative pedagogical strategies and methods for studying and teaching about non-Christian and non-White masculinities, for example, by identifying the different sources, texts, media, archives, and ethnographic engagements that should be deployed in these endeavors. We welcome proposals for individual presentations and panel presentations.

This year a joint-sponsored session with the Men, Masculinities, and Religions (MMR), the Islam, Gender and Women (IGW) and Religion in Europe (RiE) Units will examine: Islamophobia, the body, and gendered/racialized policies of the state from a transnational perspective (including, but not limited to, European perspectives).

As opposed to a traditional paper/panel setup, the session will be formed around a set of very short (6-7 minute) initial provocations/remarks that will serve as the foundation for subsequent discussion by session attendees seated at small discussion tables. Therefore, for this joint-sponsored session, IGW, MMR, and RiE are not accepting proposals for standard full-length conference papers or for prearranged paper panels. Rather, we solicit proposals for short remarks that will serve as the basis for small group discussions. Possible topics for proposals include: state surveillance of Muslim communities; state policies in relation to gender binarization; gendered/sexualized practices of detention or torture; the production and circulation of images/representations of Muslim men as terrorists; headscarf/hijab/burkini controversies and legislation; gendered/sexualized hate crimes in the broader public; the mainstreaming of alt-right and white nationalist political movements and discourses; Muslim vulnerability or acquiescence to, negotiations with, and/or resistance to such discourses and practices; methodologies within the study of Islam, gender/race, the body, and the state; and methodologies for studying the intersections between Islamophobia, gender, femininity, and masculinity. Since this session is co-sponsored by the Religion in Europe Unit, proposals addressing European contexts are encouraged.

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

Chair - De Sondy, Amanullah, University College Cork, [amanullah.desondy@ucc.ie](mailto:amanullah.desondy@ucc.ie)

## Middle Eastern Christianity Unit

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#### Call Text:

Peacemaking and Hospitality in Middle Eastern Christianity: Accommodating Difference in the Eastern Christian Traditions

Early Christian literature speaks often about peacemaking through recurring concepts such as lovingkindness, forgiveness, hospitality, mercy, philanthropy, and *koinonia*. The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit and Eastern Orthodox Christianity Unit are soliciting paper proposals addressing the ways that Middle Eastern Christians have expressed or promoted harmony in conditions of diversity (such as religious, cultural, or political pluralism). This call for papers invites contributions that approach the theme in its broadest senses, whether it be community building, responding to emergencies, friendship, caregiving, charity, or any other expressions of goodwill across boundaries. Proposals from all academic disciplines and all historic time periods will be strongly considered based on the clarity of thesis, a well-defined body of evidence, and appropriate scholarly methodologies.

#### Interrituality in Middle Eastern Christianity, Islam, and Judaism

The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit and Ritual Studies Unit are issuing a Call for Papers that solicits proposals

related to the interterritoriality of religious life in the Middle East—particularly of Christians with other religious communities. Topics of interterritoriality could include liturgy and liturgical practices, pilgrimage, or any other way that Middle Eastern Christian practices participate in, or resemble, the practices of other communities. This call for papers is open to research in all academic disciplines and all historical time periods; we are particularly interested in proposals that discuss the ways in which rituals serve as markers of identity and means of appropriation in the Middle East. Proposals will be judged based on clarity of thesis, a well-defined body of evidence, and appropriate scholarly methodologies.

#### Middle Eastern Christians and Empire

The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit is issuing a Call for Papers addressing the life of Middle Eastern Christian communities in empires. Throughout history Middle Eastern Christians have related to imperial politics, starting with the governments of the Romans and Sassanians, and most recently with the Ottoman, French, and British Empires. This call for papers requests proposals that consider ways Christian communities navigated imperial politics throughout any period of history. All appropriate scholarly methodologies will be considered, with preference being given to proposals that express a clear thesis, well-defined body of evidence, and specific methodologies and theories.

#### 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 - Zaborowski, Jason R., Bradley University, [jzaborowski@bradley.edu](mailto:jzaborowski@bradley.edu)

Chair - Andraos, Michel, Catholic Theological Union, [mandraos@ctu.edu](mailto:mandraos@ctu.edu)

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

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#### Call Text:

- Spiritual practices of repair that address moral injury in individuals or communities, such as rituals adapted from religious resources or the use of traditional sacraments.
- (Re)Defining Moral Injury: Intersectional approaches that engage and revise definitions of moral injury as a concept used in different disciplines and social contexts.
- Twenty-five Years of Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery*  
To honor the twenty-fifth anniversary of Judith Herman's landmark book, *Trauma and Recovery: the aftermath of violence - from domestic abuse to political terror*, we invite papers that explore the impact of Herman's insights and theory on current clinical practices, religious and theological understandings,

and/or psychological treatments for trauma survivors and systems of violence. The session will include a response by the author. Co-sponsored with Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit.

- The moral injury implications of teaching ethics within institutional contexts which deny, subvert, or fail to address sexual assault and other systems of harm.

Other related proposals are always welcome.

**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 anguishing 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; and
- 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, [zacharymoon@gmail.com](mailto:zacharymoon@gmail.com)

Chair - Bounds, Elizabeth Margaret, Emory University, [ebounds@emory.edu](mailto:ebounds@emory.edu)

## Mormon Studies Unit

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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.

For 2017, we are sponsoring an author-meets-critics session on Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's new book, *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835-1870*, for which we do not seek proposals.

As we are able to co-sponsor one additional session with another unit, we seek proposals on Mormonism and Queer studies or on religious conversion (for a possible co-sponsorship between Mormon Studies Unit, Status of LGBTIQ Person in the Profession, and the Queer Studies Unit).

Rituals of Aging: We encourage paper proposals that engage in research on rites of passage marking the phases of aging, including rituals of retirement in different religious traditions. We are considering a co-sponsorship with the Ritual Studies Unit.

#### 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 and steering committee members at all times

#### Method of submission:

PAPERS

#### Leadership:

Chair - Fluhman, J. Spencer, Brigham Young University, [fluhman@byu.edu](mailto:fluhman@byu.edu)

Chair - McDannell, Colleen, University of Utah, [colleen.mcd@utah.edu](mailto:colleen.mcd@utah.edu)

## Music and Religion Unit

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#### Call Text:

The Music and Religion Unit invites papers or panels on the relationship between music and religion in the context of contemporary or historical cultures. We seek proposals that bring innovative methodological considerations to the study of musical phenomena in relation to the meeting's 2017 theme, Religion and the Most Vulnerable. Papers or panels which incorporate/demonstrate live performance as part of the session (or at other venues in the AAR program) are particularly welcome. In particular we welcome submissions on the following topics:

- The musical legacy of the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wife Coretta Scott King, and the uses of music in the Civil Rights Movement, fits well with the conference theme. We are also interested in ways that we can connect Coretta Scott King's graduation from Boston's New England Conservatory of Music with a Mus.B in voice, and her presence in Boston resulting in her union with Martin Luther King. Coretta King and others (like Bernice Johnson Reagon and the SNCC Singers) used music to fund the Civil Rights

Movement (Coretta gave concerts to raise money for the SCLC). Papers or pre-arranged panels will be considered. Co-sponsored by the Theology of Martin Luther King Unit.

- Uses of the term “Pagan” to either describe music associated with a set of religious or spiritual cultures and practices or the ways in which “pagan” was used as a term of exoticization of art and popular musics in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Some suggestions for topics might include Contemporary Pagan musical traditions and chants, use of music in ritual, Pagan musicians and festivals, “pagan” as signifier or marketing term for exotic or non-western musics. We welcome a variety of approaches and methodologies to documenting, comparing and theorizing Pagan music. Co-sponsored by the Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit.
- Music as a "weapon of the weak" (protest movements, contemporary and 20th century), as well as music as a propaganda tool for the powerful (this could include recent controversies around the Star-Spangled Banner).
- Papers that capitalize on the meeting's Boston location: Charles Ives’ sanctifying of the Shaw Memorial in his *Three Places in New England*, or the role of music in Christian Science, would be topically interesting.
- Papers pegged to specific anniversaries: It is the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love and the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.
- Consideration of the constituent parts of music - such as rhythm, sound, and line - as philosophic categories with religious ramifications.

#### 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 - Rycenga, Jennifer, San Jose State University, [jrycenga@earthlink.net](mailto:jrycenga@earthlink.net)

Chair - Stowe, David, Michigan State University, [stowed@msu.edu](mailto:stowed@msu.edu)

## Mysticism Unit

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#### Call Text:

- Mysticism, Social Justice and Political Activism

- Mysticism and the Arts
- Defining Mysticism: The issue of definitions – both their content and their utility – has resurfaced as a topic of debate in religious studies, and the phenomena embraced by the rubric “mysticism” present an especially intriguing opportunity for this kind of categorical reflection. Authors are asked to reflect on past, present, and possible new formulations of the category of “mysticism,” including its presumed antitheses, its gendered associations, and its relationship to secular and neoliberal reformulations of the “religious.” We invite papers that consider the question of how “mysticism” has and should be defined, and what the role of a definition of mysticism should be. Papers might propose definitions of mysticism, reflect on past and present engagements with that question, or consider the role of definition itself with regard to mysticism. For a possible co-sponsorship with the Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit.
- Bodies and Boundaries: The Body as breaking/testing/pushing boundaries in Mysticism and Asceticism. For a possible co-sponsorship with the Body and Religion Unit.
- Mysticism and the Self: we invite proposals that explore how mysticism constructs and deconstructs models of the self and subjectivity. Papers might consider how individual mystic thinkers or traditions have conceptualized the self, what mystical experiences suggest about how the self should be understood, or what philosophical or psychological implications mysticism might present for our understanding of subjectivity. For a possible cosponsor with Psychology, Culture and Religion Unit.
- Mysticism and the Feminine: we are interested in papers on the broad topic of "Mysticism and the Feminine." Such papers could include analyses of the regulation and resistance of female and female-identified mystics, the feminization of certain mystical states, the category of the symbolic feminine in mystical approaches, female divinity, and/or mysticism and the "monstrous feminine." For a possible co-sponsor with Women and Religion Unit.

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 Website at [www.aarmysticism.org](http://www.aarmysticism.org). We have also started a listserv, and those interested may write to [aarmysticism-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:aarmysticism-owner@yahoogroups.com) or sign up through the 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

We do NOT accept proposals by email.

Leadership:

Chair - Blum, Jason N., Davidson College, [jnblum09@gmail.com](mailto:jnblum09@gmail.com)

Chair - Gleig, Ann, University of Central Florida, [ann.gleig@ucf.edu](mailto:ann.gleig@ucf.edu)

## Native Traditions in the Americas Unit

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Call Text:

We invite individual paper and group proposals on any aspect of Native Traditions in the Americas (North, Central and South). We especially encourage proposals on the following topics in light of AAR's theme of religion and the most vulnerable:

- The Dakota access pipeline protests at Standing Rock.
- For a possible quad-sponsorship with the Law, Religion and Culture Unit, the Religion and Ecology Unit and the Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit: When the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed suit in U.S. District Court against the Army Corps of Engineers in July 2016, they argued that the Dakota Access Pipeline "threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe." We seek paper or panel proposals for a co-sponsored session on the intersections of law, ecology, and Native American traditions.
- Urban Religious Indigeneity for possible co-sponsorship with Indigenous Religious Traditions: While indigenous communities are often seen as necessarily connected to rural spaces and places, urban centers have also historically been central locales for the development and persistence of indigenous religious traditions. We invite proposals that examine the role of religion in urban indigenous communities both past and present. Moreover, while our discussion will not be limited to indigenous communities in the New England area, we welcome papers that engage religious indigeneity in Boston and the surrounding region. We also encourage papers that examine how the practice of these religious traditions in urban spaces and places challenge constructions of indigeneity.
- Indigenous feminisms and vulnerability addressing a broad range of topics including but not limited to women and activism, sexual assault, silencing of victims, decolonizing of gender identity and roles.
- Loss of local sacred sites and healthy places in the New England area.
- Health of planet and animals such as habitat loss or extinction threats.
- Space and place for indigenous rhetoric and indigenous-based scholarship within AAR.
- Technologies of resistance such as boycotting, protests, walks, rides, and online petitions.

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 - Pesantubbee, Michelene, University of Iowa, [michelene-pesantubbe@uiowa.edu](mailto:michelene-pesantubbe@uiowa.edu)

Chair - Crawford O'Brien, Suzanne J., Pacific Lutheran University, [crawfosj@plu.edu](mailto:crawfosj@plu.edu)

## New Religious Movements Unit

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Call Text:

The New Religious Movements Unit welcomes all papers that address research pertinent to the study of emergent, "alternative," or minority religions. In particular, we encourage submissions on the topics of:

- Atheisms and blasphemies
- Political religions
- Violence and extremism
- Metaphysical religions, particularly but not exclusively those of New England origin
- Futures and Frontiers of Religion (for a possible co-sponsored session with Religion in the American West Unit): What role do violence, exclusion, and/or extremism play in the building of—or failure to build—utopia(s)?
- We are especially interested in papers that forefront concerns of race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability within these topics.

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 tolerance, community building and maintenance, ritual and doctrinal innovation, and other aspects of religious life.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Goodwin, Megan, Syracuse University, [meganpgoodwin@gmail.com](mailto:meganpgoodwin@gmail.com)

Chair - Rapport, Jeremy, College of Wooster, [jrapport@wooster.edu](mailto:jrapport@wooster.edu)

## Nineteenth Century Theology Unit

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### Call Text:

The steering committee of the Nineteenth-Century Theology Unit is planning for three sessions in Boston:

- A pre-arranged session will gather scholars from different areas in the study of religion for analysis and discussion of Ted Vial's book *Modern Religion, Modern Race* (Oxford University Press, 2016). Topics will include religion and race as co-constituted categories in 19th-century Germany; racialized dimensions of concepts of historical development, teleology, and progress; the relevance of the book for critiques and analyses of secularism; and racialized ways of thinking about human groups and identity among 19th-century thinkers.
- For a second session on Luther's Nineteenth-Century Heirs and Interpreters (to be co-sponsored by the History of Christianity Unit), we seek papers that investigate Luther's theological legacy in the nineteenth century by examining how his ideas were appropriated or critiqued by important nineteenth-century religious thinkers, including ones outside of northern Europe. We are particularly interested in proposals that engage, from a variety of geographical and theological vantage points, with essays in the following volume: Matthew L. Becker, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).
- For a third session on Emerson as Theological Resource in the Anthropocene we seek papers that explore the contemporary relevance of the religious thought of Ralph Waldo Emerson and other American Transcendentalists for constructive theology, environmental ethics, and related theoretical pursuits.

### 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

### Leadership:

Chair - Gooch, Todd, Eastern Kentucky University, [todd.gooch@eku.edu](mailto:todd.gooch@eku.edu)

## North American Hinduism Unit

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### Call Text:

This Program Unit seeks to advance the study of Hindus and Hindu traditions in North America, and to nurture thoughtful debate on the methodologies and theories unique to and appropriate for this subject. We welcome any paper or panel submissions that might fulfill these goals.

Specifically for the 2017 AAR, we invite individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable proposals on the following five topics. Beside each topic is a point person to contact if interested or for more information:

- Social justice activism and solidarity building across communities (Bhakti Mamtora, [bhaktim@ufl.edu](mailto:bhaktim@ufl.edu) and Alexandra Kaloyanides, [akaloyan@stanford.edu](mailto:akaloyan@stanford.edu))
- Goddesses: within diaspora, New Age translations, pedagogy, etc. (Leena Taneja, [Leena.taneja@zu.ac.ae](mailto:Leena.taneja@zu.ac.ae))
- Caste within diasporic communities (Sailaja Krishnamurti, [skrishna@yorku.ca](mailto:skrishna@yorku.ca))
- Bioethics -- for potential co-sponsorship with the Religion and Bioethics Unit (Anna Pokazanyeva, [apokazan@calpoly.edu](mailto:apokazan@calpoly.edu) and Michael Altman, [michael.altman@ua.edu](mailto:michael.altman@ua.edu))
- Theory and method in the study of transnational Hindu religions (Anandi Salinas, [alsalin@emory.edu](mailto:alsalin@emory.edu))
- The NAH Unit especially solicits roundtables and other panel formats that resist the formal reading of papers and invite discussion, collaboration, and creativity.

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 and steering committee members at all times

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Pokazanyeva, Anna, California Polytechnic State University, [apokazan@calpoly.edu](mailto:apokazan@calpoly.edu)

Chair - Altman, Michael, University of Alabama, [michael.altman@ua.edu](mailto:michael.altman@ua.edu)

## North American Religions Unit

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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 especially interested in sponsoring sessions that explore the 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 in order to place them on the conference program. For panel proposals, diversity of rank/seniority (including graduate student, post-doctorate, junior and senior participants) and race and ethnicity is strongly encouraged. 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.

In addition to the above, we also encourage proposals on the following topics for our 2017 meeting in Boston, Massachusetts

- Decolonizing Puritan studies
- Islam and US politics
- Religion and education: religious schools, religious education, homeschooling, comparative schooling
- Religion and Public History/Museums
- North American Religions and Pedagogy
- Religion and music/the arts
- Critical interrogations of white Christianity or Christianity and race in America
- Teaching the survey
- Religion and Public Health
- Religion and the Environment/Religion and Standing Rock
- Media in the mediation of American religion
- Prayer and Political Activism
- Native American activism, resource extraction, and spirituality

We also invite proposals for possible co-sponsorships:

\*With Afro-American History: Explorations of relationships among American Religious History and African American religions, particularly through an engagement with new works such as Josef Sorett's *Spirit in the Dark: A Religious History of Racial Aesthetics* (2016) and Judith Weisenfeld's *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration* (2017), (for a potential co-sponsored panel with the North American Religions/Afro-American Religious History Unit).

\*With Evangelical Studies: studies of evangelicalism and contemporary politics

Mission Statement:

Purpose, Practices & Procedures:

1. 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.*

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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 & 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: Other (please explain below)

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Johnson, Sylvester, Northwestern University, [sylvester.johnson@northwestern.edu](mailto:sylvester.johnson@northwestern.edu)

Chair - Suh, Sharon A., Seattle University, [suhs@seattleu.edu](mailto:suhs@seattleu.edu)

## Open and Relational Theologies Unit

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Call Text:

The Open and Relational Theologies Unit explores theological ideas and their implications as related to the traditions of Open Theism, Process Theology, and other Relational Theologies. These explorations tend to be

constructive in nature, and involve theological and philosophical speculation about the nature of God, freedom, power, relationality, love, and more.

For 2017, we invite paper proposals for the following sessions:

#### Open-Relational Theologies Beyond Christianity

No doubt, traditional Open Theism has emerged as a form of Christian theology. However, the core principles of Open-Relational Theologies are not restricted to Christian thought. We welcome paper submissions that explore ways in which Open-Relational notions of power, knowledge, freedom, ultimacy, love, etc. are being expressed in non-Christian traditions.

#### Open Theology, Open Borders? Religion and the Most Vulnerable

In light of the 2017 AAR theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," the Open and Relational Theologies unit is holding a session that focuses on theologies of action and the implications for engaging the most vulnerable populations. This session will explore fundamental questions, like:

- What are the theological implications of an open-relational theology in an era of globalization and increased migration?
- What does the vulnerability of God mean for the vulnerability of the poor?
- What does a theology of embodiment mean for vulnerable populations as related to relational theology? How do we turn relational theology into activism?
- What does the notion of God as essentially loving, entail for methods of social activism?
- Papers proposals addressing these, and related, questions are welcome.

#### Does God Need the World? Whitehead and Tillich in Conversation (Joint Session)

In this time of looming climate catastrophe a major impediment to action has been the theological conviction of many that God will not let us destroy our world. Embedded in this idea is that we are indispensable to God. What if that is not the case? This joint session between the Tillich: Issues in Theology and Culture and the Open and Relational Theologies Units will explore the fundamental question: "Does God need the world?" We are seeking papers for a panel which explore topics such as: 1) The metaphysics of the divine, 2) cosmology, 3) the place humanity in the life of the Divine, and 4) related issues. Paper proposals addressing this question by engagement with the work of Paul Tillich and/or Alfred North Whitehead are welcome.

#### Mission Statement:

This unit explores theological ideas generally related to the following:

- Theology involves speculation about who God truly is and what God really does
- God's primary characteristic is love
- Creatures — at least humans — are genuinely free to make choices
- God experiences others in some way analogous to how creatures experience others
- Both creatures and God are relational beings, which means that both God and creatures are affected by others in give-and-take relationships
- God experience changes, yet God's nature or essence remains the same
- Creatures are called to act in ways that please God and make the world a better place

- The future is open — it is not predetermined by God
- God’s expectations about the future are often partly dependent upon creaturely actions

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Schwartz, Wm. Andrew, Center for Process Studies, [andrew@ctr4process.org](mailto:andrew@ctr4process.org)

## Pentecostal—Charismatic Movements Unit

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Call Text:

The Pentecostal/Charismatic Unit invites individual paper proposals--or complete sessions of related papers, or proposed panel discussion or book-discussion sessions with particular emphasis on:

- Pentecostalism and politics, the influence of Pentecostal/charismatic organizations and/or individuals on 2016 campaign, Pentecostal/Charismatic organizations and Black Lives Matter movement, Standing Rock movement, or other grassroots political action.
- Charismatic Christianity, specifically we are interested in new scholarship on the varied institutions and individuals that comprise Charismatic Christianity such as: C. Peter Wagner & New Apostolic Reformation, Dominionism, and charismatics, or new prophetic movements.
- Global Pentecostalism and resistance movements. We are seeking submissions that can speak to the ethical or theological constructions of Pentecostal pacifism, and other forms of non-violent resistance, particularly in a global context.

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

Leadership:

Chair - Payne, Leah, George Fox University, [lpayne@georgefox.edu](mailto:lpayne@georgefox.edu)

Chair - Sanchez Walsh, Arlene, Azusa Pacific University, [Asanchez-walsh@apu.edu](mailto:Asanchez-walsh@apu.edu)

## Philosophy of Religion Unit

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Call Text:

The steering committee is particularly interested in work that engages philosophy of religion in its social and political contexts. We invite proposals on the following topics:

- Race, sex, and gender in analytic philosophy of religion,
- Politics of ineffability,
- Philosophy of religion and ecology,
- Reparations and responsibility,
- Global critiques of American political theology and public discourse on religion,
- Non-human beings and worlds, and
- Hannah Arendt

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 - Rubenstein, Mary-Jane, Wesleyan University, [mrubenstein@wesleyan.edu](mailto:mrubenstein@wesleyan.edu)

Chair - Lewis, Thomas A., Brown University, [tlewis@brown.edu](mailto:tlewis@brown.edu)

## Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit

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Call Text:

We invite papers on any aspect of the theme of Eros and Ascent in Antiquity, Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval Worlds, particularly as relate to the pagan, Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions.



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

Chair - Corrigan, Kevin, Emory University, [kcorrig@emory.edu](mailto:kcorrig@emory.edu)

## Practical Theology Unit

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Call Text:

The Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy 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. Practical Theology 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.

These Units would like to explore President Eddie Glaude's 2017 presidential theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," by taking up the topic of theological education broadly understood among or with the most vulnerable: those on the margins, in the streets, in prison, or other spaces of marginality. To this end, this co-sponsored session invites proposals either for preset panels or individual presentations on the following topics:

- Experiential pedagogies or transformative theological education among or with the most vulnerable
- Experiential pedagogies or transformative theological education outside of the classroom and in spaces of marginality
- Theological education among first generation students
- Transformative theological and religious scholarship generated within/among/by communities and scholars in 2/3rds world
- Alternative approaches to the production of knowledge arising out of spaces of marginality that challenge boundaries among scholarship, service, and activism

Fr. Daniel Franklin Pilario of St. Vincent's School of Theology in Quezon City, Philippines has been invited to respond to the panel.

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 - Kaufman, Tone Stangeland, MF Norwegian School of Theology, [tkaufman@mf.no](mailto:tkaufman@mf.no)

Chair - Scharen, Christian A. B., Auburn Theological Seminary, [cscharen@auburnseminary.org](mailto:cscharen@auburnseminary.org)

## Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit

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### Call Text:

We invite proposals that address the topic—“Resisting Trump: Pragmatist Norms and Practices.” This topic encourages deep inquiry regarding the integral nature of reflection and activism, of academic work and extra-academic organizing and advocacy in response to the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States. For many pragmatists, democracy is an article of faith if not an object of religious piety. Thus, we encourage the submission of proposals that reassess the meaning of democracy in the age of Trump. The AAR’s Presidential Theme for 2017 is “Religion and the Most Vulnerable.” We welcome papers that address this critical issue in light the pragmatist, empiricist, and naturalistic foci of the unit. Regarding the latter foci, we specifically invite proposals that address the topic of religious naturalism: how is our construction of nature and comportment with its multifarious character a religious phenomenon? In addition, we solicit proposals on (1) William James and (2) on the relations among Richard Rorty’s *Achieving Our Country*, James Baldwin’s *The Fire Next Time*, and Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*.

### 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 - Hart, William David, Macalester College, [whart1@macalester.edu](mailto:whart1@macalester.edu)

## Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit

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Call text:

Religion, Psychology and the Most Vulnerable

In light of the 2017 AAR theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," we are asking: What is role of religion in the harm or healing of Boston's most vulnerable? The PCR is seeking papers that explore the psychological, spiritual and/or theological dynamics that religion plays in local traumas and violence of the Boston area. Events worthy of exploration include historic events like the Boston Massacre and the Salem Witch Trials, as well as more contemporary situations: the sexual abuse scandal in the archdiocese of Boston; responses to the abuse and cover up by Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP) and other advocacy groups; the 2015 Boston Marathon bombing; the ongoing identification of Boston among the top 10 "most racist cities" list based on the number of hate crimes.

Fences, Walls and Bars: Belonging and Exclusion in Psychological and Religious Perspective

Major challenges of our time – immigration, religiously motivated hate crimes, and mass incarceration – use cultural and personal boundaries to control and exclude, punish and criminalize, shame and dehumanize others, while masking fear, anxiety, hatred and disgust among the more powerful. This call for papers seeks new insights and analysis of role that psychological and religious motivations play in both the construction and deconstruction of fences, walls, and bars.

Mysticism and the Self

We invite proposals that explore how mysticism constructs and deconstructs models of the self and subjectivity. Papers might consider how individual mystic thinkers or traditions have conceptualized the self, what mystical experiences suggest about how the self should be understood, or what philosophical or psychological implications mysticism might present for our understanding of subjectivity.

Possible co-sponsorship with Mysticism Group

Twenty-five Years of Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery*

To honor the twenty-fifth anniversary of Judith Herman's landmark book, *Trauma and Recovery: the aftermath of violence - from domestic abuse to political terror*, we invite papers that explore the impact of Herman's insights and theory on current clinical practices, religious and theological understandings, and/or psychological treatments for trauma survivors and systems of violence. The session will include a response by the author.

Possible co-sponsorship with Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Group

## Womanist Contributions in Psychology, Culture, and Religion

We are seeking papers and/or panel proposals that explore the contributions and critiques to theory and practice in psychology, culture and religion from womanist perspectives.

"Psychoanalysis and Religion: What Is the State of the Art?"

Possible co-sponsorship with the Queer Studies in Religion Group

### Mission Statement:

The PCR unit is a Related Scholarly Organization (RSO) of the AAR, 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. Please visit our Website at <http://pcr-aar.org/>.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Bulkeley, Kelly, Graduate Theological Union, [bulkeleyk@gmail.com](mailto:bulkeleyk@gmail.com)

Chair - Campbell-Reed, Eileen, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, [eileen.campbellreed@gmail.com](mailto:eileen.campbellreed@gmail.com)

## Quaker Studies Unit

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Call Text:

- Race, Gender, Class: Quakers in the Public Sphere  
Over some 350 years of religious history, Quakers have often maintained a dissenting/nonconformist self-understanding and have, at times, taken well-publicized positions against dominant cultural mores. Thus, they offer a fascinating case study of religiously motivated resistance to established norms and power structure—the prophetic function of religion in the public sphere. They also offer a case study of the loss of the prophetic function as they amassed wealth and became more protective of the status quo.

We invite proposals for papers that explore the ethics, "testimonies," and practices of Quakers and Quaker-inspired groups, either across history or in the present. Quaker models of engagement with society, politics, and dominant mores are especially invited. We are particularly interested in studies that address the negotiation of race, gender, and class within these models - both *internal* to Quaker communities and *externally* in their interaction with other religions and structures of power.

- In a co-sponsored session with the African Association for the Study of Religions, the Quaker Studies Unit invites papers that explore Quakerism, Quaker identity formation, and Quaker spiritualities in central and eastern Africa using postcolonial perspectives.

Because there are more Quakers in Kenya than in any other country, the Quaker experience in Africa is significant. Despite this significance, the impact of Quakerism in Kenya and other central and eastern

Africa nations remains underrepresented in Quaker studies. In this interdisciplinary session we will begin to redress this imbalance through papers that focus on central and eastern Africa nations, especially Kenya. This session seeks papers that examine any of the following themes: 1) the impact of Quakerism on the self-understanding of African Quakers; 2) Quaker strategies of enculturation and de-colonization among African Quakers; and 3) contemporary social and theological tensions experienced between African Quakers and Western Quakers, using Quakerism as a specific case study as to how Western religious traditions are maintained and expressed.

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, University of Lancaster, [jon.kershner@gmail.com](mailto:jon.kershner@gmail.com)

Chair - Spencer, Carole Dale, George Fox Seminary, [spencca@earlham.edu](mailto:spencca@earlham.edu)

## Queer Studies in Religion Unit

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Call Text:

This Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtables on all topics related to queer theory and LGBT studies in religion, especially those focused on bisexual and/or transgender studies, those that foreground race as an analytical framework, and those that consider contexts beyond the United States and that engage religions other than Christianity.

For the 2017 annual meeting, we are particularly interested in:

- Papers for a possible author-meets-critics panel on Ashon Crawley's *Blackpentecostal Breath* (Fordham, 2016), to be co-sponsored with the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Program Unit.
- Papers for a possible author-meets-critics panel on Thelathia Nikki Young's *Black Queer Ethics, Family, and Philosophical Imagination* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), to be co-sponsored with the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection, Religion & Sexuality, and Womanist Approaches to Religion & Society Program Units.
- Papers for a panel on the relevance of Lee Edelman's work for the study of religion, theology, and sacred texts to be co-sponsored with the Society of Biblical Literature's LGBTI/Queer Hermeneutics Unit.
- Papers that relate to the 2017 Presidential theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," particularly papers that consider queer Muslim bodies and queer approaches to Mormonism.

- Papers related to the location of the 2017 annual meeting, Boston, particularly papers highlighting queer approaches to (Irish) Catholicism, including the Catholic sex abuse crisis.
- "Psychoanalysis and Religion: What Is the State of the Art?" for a possible co-sponsorship with Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit
- We seek proposals on Mormonism and Queer studies (for a possible co-sponsorship between Mormon Studies Unit, Status of LGBTIQ Person in the Profession, and the Queer Studies Unit).

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 until after final acceptance/rejection

Method of submission:  
PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - White, Heather, University of Puget Sound, [hwhite@pugetsound.edu](mailto:hwhite@pugetsound.edu)

Chair - Young, Thelathia, Bucknell University, [nikki.young@bucknell.edu](mailto:nikki.young@bucknell.edu)

## Qur'an Unit

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Call Text:

The Qur'an Unit welcomes papers and organized panels 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. Topics that were mentioned at the last annual meeting are: Animals and the Qur'an, Conceptions of time and history in the Qur'an, Liturgical uses of the Qur'an, Material culture and the Qur'an, Mystical letters and symbols in the Qur'an, Popular culture and the Qur'an, Reception history of the Qur'an, Regional issues and the Qur'an (e.g., the Qur'an in Turkey, Malaysia, etc.), Ulum al-Qur'an. This list of topics is meant as inspirational rather than limiting. If you have a proposal not on this list, please be sure to submit it. The Steering Committee solicits proposals that can be linked to other units in the AAR, since linking with other units allows an additional session for each unit.

Evaluation of paper and panel proposals to the Qur'an Unit are done by the Steering Committee through blind 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. We hope that this will encourage all members to send us their best proposals. For any questions, please feel free to contact the co-chairs.

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

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

Chair - Saleh, Walid, University of Toronto, [walid.saleh@utoronto.ca](mailto:walid.saleh@utoronto.ca)

Chair - Newby, Gordon D., Emory University, [gnewby@emory.edu](mailto:gnewby@emory.edu)

## Reformed Theology and History Unit

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**Call Text:**

The Reformed Theology and History Unit invites papers on “The Kingdom of God and Civil Government” and “The ‘Solas’ in Reformed Traditions.”

How does the Kingdom of God relate to civil governments? Reformed Christians have historically endorsed the notion that Christians can and should participate in civil governments. But there are divergent views on how this participation relates to the Kingdom of God. For example, do Reformed traditions share a “two Kingdoms” theology with Lutheran traditions, or do they offer substantial alternatives to such views? And how do Reformed traditions deal with the problems of theocracy, and/or the tyranny of civil rulers?

Theologically and/or historically, how do we understand the five “solos” of the Reformation, and the purposes for which they emerged? What role do they, or should they, play today in the life of our churches, in the context of ecumenical dialogue, and in the global, interreligious community? Do the “solos” need to be discarded, replaced, retrieved, and/or reprinted?

We welcome papers that pursue historical inquiries and/or make constructive theological proposals.

In addition to holding two sessions that draw from paper submissions, the Reformed Theology and History Unit will co-sponsor an invited panel with the Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit seeks to open up Reformed traditions for critical review and study, focusing on its characteristic themes in theology and historical patterns of polity and practice. Our aim is to present panels and paper sessions that balance historical with theological methods, single figures within larger cultural movements, and core themes with 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 - Rigby, Cynthia, Austin Theological Seminary, [crigby@austinseminary.edu](mailto:crigby@austinseminary.edu)

Chair - Billings, J. Todd, Western Theological Seminary, [todd.billings@westernsem.edu](mailto:todd.billings@westernsem.edu)

## Religion and Cities Unit

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Call Text:

The 2016 presidential election revealed disparity in voting patterns between urban and rural dwellers. In what ways do these patterns mirror disparate religious imaginings of cities? In *Gods of the City* (1999), Robert Orsi argues that scholars of religion in cities cannot contend with the religious lives of city dwellers without also contending with the morally charged fantasies of the city that infuse American perceptions of those religious lives. Orsi writes, "Spaces within the urban landscape are both geographical sites where real people live, and constructions of terror and desire among those who live elsewhere." (6) This session calls for papers that address the use of rhetorical and symbolic constructions within American religious rhetoric (e.g., the city on the hill, the New Jerusalem, Sodom and Gomorrah) as well as constructions within the US' moral imaginary, where the highest ideals and values are perceived to either be affirmed or deformed.

Papers should focus on the current political climate or its recent past, and topics may include rhetorical descriptions of US cities through religious language, examinations of cities in the religious moral imagination, or connections between religion, anti-urban rhetoric, and American identity. Individual paper proposals will be given priority, but we will consider panel proposals that present a multi-faceted approach to a unified topic.

The 2017 AAR meeting to be held in Boston also opens up possibilities for using a regional lens in discussions about religion and cities and their contested historical meanings. For a potential co-sponsored panel with the Afro-American Religious History Unit, we are looking for papers that focus on Black historical landmarks (such as Lewis and Harriett Hayden House, African Meetinghouse, Copp's Hill Burying Ground, Black Heritage Trail, the Underground Railroad, etc.) and their sacred histories in the city, with attention to how they challenge dominant perceptions of Boston's religious history.

In the U.S. and other Western countries gay clubs/bars/other gathering spaces are closing and LGBT churches are shrinking. Is there a correlation between the disappearance of religious and secular gay spaces, or are they separate phenomena? What explains these developments (e.g., the success of online dating apps or growing inclusiveness of churches)? What are the effects (e.g., decrease of visibility of, and sense of community among, (religious) LGBTs)? [possible co-sponsorship with Gay Men and Religion Unit]

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 - Slessarev-Jamir, Helene, Claremont School of Theology, [hslessarevjamir@cst.edu](mailto:hslessarevjamir@cst.edu)

Chair - Edwards, Elise, Baylor University, [elise\\_edwards@baylor.edu](mailto:elise_edwards@baylor.edu)

## Religion and Disability Studies Unit

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Call Text:

The Religion and Disability Studies Unit welcomes paper submissions on any aspect of the intersection between religion, theology, and disability studies. *If your paper is accepted we ask that you submit the full text online no later than two weeks before the meeting (by November 1)* so as to facilitate discussion among presenters and participants alike. We have particular interests in the following topics:

Papers that address how our religious traditions participate in the production of the social evils that many persons with disabilities experience and what concrete actions can our academy offer to relieve and alleviate the vulnerability to which they are exposed

Papers that explore disability and aging, for example, living with and/or caring for-accompanying persons with disabilities: life-long disabilities and disabilities acquired as we age, aging as gendered disability experience, medicalization of disability, and varying effects on vulnerable elderly populations

Papers that engage disability in diverse religious traditions and cultural contexts, from historical, textual, or contemporary perspectives

Papers that consider the public voice, of an activist nature, that advances dismantling religio-theological as well as social, political, medical, legal, and economic discriminations against and raises the voices of people with disabilities

We also invite papers for a joint session with the Class, Religion, and Theology Unit on the complex intersections between disability and class which strengthen, challenge, and complicate religious, moral, social, economic, and political frameworks that affect the vulnerability of people with often co-occurring marginalizations.

We have particular interest in papers that address the following questions:

- When studying embodied concerns and responses to issues affecting vulnerable persons/groups, how do frameworks for class and disability analyses strengthen (challenge, complicate, or trouble) religious, theological, or moral analysis?
- How might class analysis provide a constructive possibility to shift the paradigm in discourses that cast disability, race, religion, sexuality, etc. as separate conversations?

- As social identity categories mutually constitute each other, and construct the meaning of bodies that are productive and those that are failures, what can we gain from intersectional analyses of class, disability, race, and others in religious and theological construction?

Papers for a possible joint session with the Childhood Studies and Religion Unit and the Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit dealing with issues surrounding the normative-inspired medical, psychological, mental health, and religious interventions to make the bodies and/or minds of children and young people with disabilities “whole” from a wide variety of religious and methodological perspectives (*if your paper is accepted for this "Call" you will be expected to submit the full text online by November 1*)

Papers for a possible joint session with the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit and Liberation Theologies Unit on the various ways in which bodies are used to communicate, interpret, and theologize –to tell stories drawn from signing the body—in African American and other cultures, including the use of Black American Sign Language, a distinct variant of ASL that arose from the experiences of Black Deaf people in segregated schools for the deaf

#### 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.

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

#### Method of submission:

PAPERS

#### Leadership:

Chair - Iozzio, Mary Jo, Boston College, [mary.jo.iozzio@bc.edu](mailto:mary.jo.iozzio@bc.edu)

## Religion and Ecology Unit

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#### Call Text:

The Religion and Ecology Unit invites proposals in accordance with the presidential theme of religion and the most vulnerable. Such papers may focus on climate change and vulnerable populations (human and nonhuman), migrant communities, climate justice movements, resistance, resilience and religion, or academia and activism. We are particularly searching for papers that critically examine the intersection between religion, ecology and justice, highlighting points of engagement, tension, and disagreement as well as solidarity and progress. Papers may focus on historical events, contemporary political issues arising from the nexus of religion and ecology, or theoretical, philosophical, or theological problems.

Following last year’s emphasis on complete panels that celebrated the Religion and Ecology Unit’s 25th anniversary, we are particularly interested in forming panels of individual papers that highlight a wide diversity of traditions and methods, give voice to students and junior scholars, or in other ways demonstrate new directions and approaches to the study of religion and ecology.

We also solicit individual papers or a complete panel proposal on Standing Rock. When the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed suit in U.S. District Court against the Army Corps of Engineers in July 2016, they argued that

the Dakota Access Pipeline "threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe." We seek paper or panel proposals for a co-sponsored session on the intersections of law, ecology, and Native American traditions, for a potential session to be jointly sponsored with Religion, Law and Culture, and Native Traditions in the Americas.

**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 such as those found in the work of theologians, philosophers, religionists, ethicists, scientists, and anthropologists, among others.

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

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

Chair - Miller, James, Queen's University, Kingston, [james.miller@queensu.ca](mailto:james.miller@queensu.ca)

Chair - Berry, Evan, American University, [berry@american.edu](mailto:berry@american.edu)

## Religion and Economy Unit

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**Call Text:**

The Religion and Economy unit provides a multidisciplinary forum for exploring intersections between religious and economic modes of social life. In addition to cultivating conversations that consider how religious ideas, practices, and sensibilities have underwritten economic institutions, systems, and orientations around the world, the unit also encourages scholarship that examines how economic activity produces social relations and subjectivities that fall both within and outside of conventional conceptions of what the study of religion has comprised. Drawing upon the conceptual and analytical tools that the study of religion offers, the group's papers and panels illuminate the character, contradictions, power, and ubiquity of systems of economy and exchange—both in the present and past.

For the 2017 Annual Meeting, the Religion and Economy unit welcomes any paper or panel proposals related to the group's mission, including but not limited to the following themes, which reflect possibilities proposed at the 2016 business meeting in San Antonio:

- The concept of value, broadly speaking. Papers might consider the relationship between value and moral "values," for example, and the exchanges that reproduce those relationships.
- Charity and the complex intermingling of business, government, non-profit, tax-exempt, and religious organizations.
- Classical theorists and theories of political economy and capitalism, including such figures as Marx, Smith, Ricardo, Bentham, Malthus, Schumpeter and Veblen and/or intersecting interpretive tropes of religious and economic histories in "neo/classical" discourses (e.g., contract theory and covenantal relations, equilibrium and extremism, or business cycles and apocalypticism, etc).

- The relationship between religion and economy under economic systems other than capitalism—including, but not limited to socialism, imperialism, and feudalism.
- Contemporary economic and religious concepts (e.g., late twentieth and early twenty-first century)—such as neoliberalism, "voodoo economics," "disruptive innovation", the brand form, "servant leadership", "natural Capitalism", immaterial labor, and the prosperity gospel. Papers might consider how these concepts can or should be rethought in light of recent political and economic developments, including the proliferation of nativist policies and figures around the world.

In addition, we welcome proposals for possible co-sponsored panels:

- The relationship between slavery, religion, and the economic. Papers might examine, for example, theological arguments surrounding slavery (both for and against), or for political and economic policies related to colonialism, mercantilism, and capitalism. (Co-sponsored with the Afro-American Religious History unit).
- Recognizing the anniversary of key works in critical theory, papers that explore the boundaries of the disciplinary significance and current utility of: Deleuze & Guattari's *Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (40th and 30th anniversaries of English translations); or, Horkheimer & Adorno's *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (70th anniversary). What have been the effects of these texts on the study of religion, and how can they help us to understand the place of religion in a period of capitalist expansion, inequality, and critique? (Co-sponsored with the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion unit)

#### 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 terms 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 conversations that traverse religious traditions, geographic locations, methodologies, 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 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, postsecularism, spirituality, affect, networks, ritual, agency, 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](mailto:elayne.oliphant@nyu.edu)

Chair - Vaca, Daniel, Brown University, [daniel\\_vaca@brown.edu](mailto:daniel_vaca@brown.edu)

## Religion and Food Unit

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Call Text:

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 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:

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.

Also related to region and calendar location, we welcome submissions that engage themes related to Thanksgiving: 1) as a ceremonial meal, 2) as a locus for nostalgia and romanticization, 3) as a place to proclaim (or deny) hospitality, and 4) as a means of asserting or appropriating identity.

We also welcome papers related to emergency food and social protest. These papers could engage questions of migration (e.g., refugee camps, food and the Underground Railroad, Boston Tea Party).

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 (consumption, production, and invention)
- Diet and sustainability
- Issues of food (in)justice, which may include food availability or insecurity, commitment to wellness, access to healthy foods, etc.
- 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 - Hicks, Derek, Wake Forest University, [hicksds@wfu.edu](mailto:hicksds@wfu.edu)

Chair - Rubel, Nora L., University of Rochester, [nrubel@mail.rochester.edu](mailto:nrubel@mail.rochester.edu)

## Religion and Humanism Unit

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### Call Text:

The "Enhancing Life Project" is composed of scholars from around the world, from many disciplines and also on seven of the world's religions. The question of the enhancement of life is one of the most contested issues across the range of disciplines. From the critics of humanism to the advocates of transhumanism, the question of enhancing human life is hotly debated. This session will explore the criteria for judging human enhancement and competing visions of human flourishing.

### Co-sponsored sessions with the Science, Technology, and Religion Unit:

Life in the 21st century benefits from technological advances in the sciences. Most technologies, ranging from medical to communication devices, from transportation to data management systems promise to enhance life. And yet as we have learned over the last centuries, technology can also endanger life. We are especially interested in papers that address some of the following questions: "From the side of ethics, how can we judge technological advances?" alongside the hermeneutical question "What visions of an enhanced life are embedded and presupposed in certain technologies?" And: "How do technological visions resonate with specific religious conceptions of enhancing life?"

### Co-sponsored session with the Ricoeur Unit:

Narrative Identity, "Identity Politics," and National Identity. Paper proposals will be considered for a co-sponsored session with the Unit. We are particularly interested in papers that draw on narrative theory and theories of identity including, but not limited to, Ricoeur in order to discuss how politics and politicians construct narratives about what it means to be human within the context of narratives of national identity.

### Panel on Terence Martin's *Truth and Irony: Philosophical Meditations on Erasmus*

Terence Martin's new book *Truth and Irony: Philosophical Meditations on Erasmus* taps into selected works of Erasmus of Rotterdam to offer a series of philosophical meditations designed to retrieve and deploy a distinctively Erasmian manner of thinking. As an invitation to think ironically about the truth of our lives for the sake of enhancing human existence, the book represents a defense of ironic truth-telling, a staunch but idiosyncratic complaint for peace, and a daring defense of pleasure in religious life. The three panelists will offer their critical reflections on Martin's book, with the author responding to those reflections.

We are also in consultation with the Religion and Science-Fiction Unit about how we imagine the future of religion and humanism in creative works.

### Mission Statement:

The Religion and Humanism Unit is a forum for constructive work incorporating humanist themes in theology, religion and the arts, and philosophy. The unit also aims to bring scholarly and critical methodologies to bear on the history of humanism and the question of the human. We engage religious historians in the task of tracing the history of humanism across its many manifestations. Understanding that humanism is a highly contested phenomenon, we also seek to bring humanism and its critics into constructive conversation. Finally, in advancing our critical and constructive goals we seek to be rigorously interdisciplinary in approach.

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 - Elwell, J. Sage, Texas Christian University, [sage.elwell@tcu.edu](mailto:sage.elwell@tcu.edu)

Chair - Jakelic, Slavica, Valparaiso University, [sj3d@virginia.edu](mailto:sj3d@virginia.edu)

## Religion and Migration Unit

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### Call Text:

The Religion and Migration Unit seeks proposals for the 2017 Annual Meeting to be held in Boston, MA, related to these two themes: Gender, ritual, and religion in the experience of migration; and Loss, Gain, or Innovation? How do religious traditions change through migration?

### 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 subscribing to our listserv, please contact Alison R. Marshall, Brandon University, [marshalla@brandonu.ca](mailto:marshalla@brandonu.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 - Marshall, Alison, Brandon University, [marshalla@brandonu.ca](mailto:marshalla@brandonu.ca)

## Religion and Politics Unit

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### Call Text:

In addition to receiving paper or panel proposals on topics generally in the purview of the Unit (which encompasses both domestic and global interconnections of religion and politics, in practice and theory), we especially welcome proposals that address the following themes:

The international rise of populist, nationalist, or anti-globalization forces or movements in the U.S., UK, France, Italy, Austria, Turkey, the Philippines, India, and other nations. In particular, we seek analyses of the religious dimensions of the populist moment. This panel is co-sponsored by Religion, Social Conflict, and Peace. (You should submit your proposal only once to either unit.)

Religious dimensions surrounding "global citizenship," including issues that traffic under this term. What does the language and possibility of global citizenship represent for its growing numbers of defenders and detractors alike? What responsibility do religion educators in public schools have for teaching global citizenship, particularly where it conflicts with national citizenship? Do religion educators share non-partisan values about democracy, human rights, or refugees? Should we be more explicit about the traits and habits necessary for citizens, and when are these controversial? This panel is co-sponsored by Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives.

The impact of new appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court. We are especially interested in papers that address issues of religious freedom, religion and social justice, religion and the most vulnerable, religion and reproductive rights, or other themes related to jurisprudence and religion.

The role of religious leaders or communities around the world in supporting or resisting increased state policies that target minority communities (e.g., surveillance of or registering Muslims, deporting immigrants, or criminal justice policies that disproportionately impact nonwhite populations).

The rising number of young people who are disaffiliating from traditional religious institutions. Papers may address the influence of technology on religious attendance, religious leadership and authority, and patterns of religious identity and belonging. We welcome papers that address this phenomenon in the U.S. but also papers that address similar trends abroad.

#### 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 lively, 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 - Biondo, Vincent, California State University, Fresno, [vbiondo@csufresno.edu](mailto:vbiondo@csufresno.edu)

Chair - Jones, Robert P., Public Religion Research Institute, [rjones@publicreligion.org](mailto:rjones@publicreligion.org)

## Religion and Popular Culture Unit

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#### Call Text:

This Unit invites both organized sessions and individual paper proposals that explore the intersections of religion and popular culture. We strongly encourage presentation formats that foster interactive environments and provide creative alternatives to the conventional reading of papers. This year, we encourage presentations that address the following topics:

- Standing Rock
- Public Mourning for Dead Celebrities



- Nostalgia
- Patriotism and Religion
- Iconoclasm, Desecration, and Blasphemy
- Religion and Popular Culture on the Ocean/Coastline
- The Summer of Love- 50 years later

We also invite submissions for a possible co-sponsored session with the History of Christianity unit: "Exegetical Uses and Abuses of Christianity in Preaching, Politics, and Popular Culture."

Public expressions and manifestations of Christianity history present through Christian history in vivid and contested ways. This session seeks to forefront the public performances of Christianity and their historicizing power. For example, how did indigenous African prophets enlist, subvert, or confirm 19th century Christian colonialism? In contemporary North American politics, what is the role of competing factions and coalitions across the Christian historical spectrum? We envision particular studies of one period which can point to earlier analogous moments and invite broad dialogue.

Finally, we offer an open call for any other topics dealing with religion and popular culture, especially proposals that address the relevance of popular culture studies for larger theoretical and methodical issues in the field of religious studies.

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 - Sieglar, Elijah, College of Charleston, [sieglere@cofc.edu](mailto:sieglere@cofc.edu)

Chair - Gregory, Rabia, University of Missouri, [rabiagregory@gmail.com](mailto:rabiagregory@gmail.com)

## Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit

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Call Text:

Nationalism and Religion Education in Public Schools

Many public schools throughout the world have been promoting the ethics of civic nationalism and multiculturalism by preparing the next generation of citizens to "think globally, act locally." These schools often used curricula to promote civic and religious liberty, equality, and pluralism, and to emphasize the majority's duty to protect the most vulnerable. But these values are being threatened by a new wave of

nationalism that has erupted throughout the world—a nationalism based on nostalgia, isolation, and ethnic cohesion.

For instance, months after the United Kingdom’s vote to leave the European Union, new Prime Minister Theresa May, charged with implementing the “Brexit” movement, said, “If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don’t understand what citizenship means.” Recent polls show that a majority of people in the following countries agree with her statement including: Chile, Germany, Indonesia, Mexico, and Russia. The countries with the highest number of people who believe that globalization is a force for bad reside in France, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Saudi Arabia.

Given the global scale of these local trends, the Religion in Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit calls for papers that examine the intersection of religion and public schools in the context of the rise of isolationist nationalism. Papers may examine ways in which the explicit, implicit, hidden, or null curricula reinforce or counter isolationist agendas; how administrators ban or accommodate religious expression by minority groups in public schools and the public square; or how educators fuel or counter the anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic, anti-immigrant sentiments expressed in news media, social media, fake news, and political platforms. Special attention may be given to the ways that public schools, as agents of the state, reinforce or reject political proposals to profile or ban religious or ethnic groups through legal barriers or through the building of actual walls. These questions are designed to reflect upon the very purpose of public education in general and of religion education in public schools specifically. The question facing many citizens today is whether public schools should promote civic nationalism and cultivate global citizens or reject globalization by encouraging a new wave of isolationist nationalism.

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Contemporary Islam Unit, we welcome proposals that address the representation of Islam and Muslims in public school education, and the role of public schools in a climate of growing Islamophobia.

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion & Politics Unit, we welcome proposals that address religious dimensions surrounding “global citizenship,” including issues that traffic under this term. What does the language and possibility of global citizenship represent for its growing numbers of defenders and detractors alike? What responsibility do religion educators in public schools have for teaching global citizenship, particularly where it conflicts with national citizenship? Do religion educators share non-partisan values about democracy, human rights, or refugees? Should we be more explicit about the traits and habits necessary for citizens, and when are these controversial?

In an open call, we also invite papers that advance the mission of this program unit.

**Mission Statement:** This Unit will promote the comparative study of religion 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 religion 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

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

Leadership:

Chair - Waggoner, Michael, University of Northern Iowa, [Mike.Waggoner@uni.edu](mailto:Mike.Waggoner@uni.edu)

Chair - Berglund, Jenny, Södertörn University, [jenny.berglund@sh.se](mailto:jenny.berglund@sh.se)

## Religion and Science Fiction Unit

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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:

- Ethics and Science Fiction, encompassing concepts such as virtue ethics and/or comparative violence Science Fiction as map and model
- Utopia/Dystopia: has our sense of mastery over future has changed?
- Transhumanism, A.I., non-human persons, and the future of human beings
- Imaginary capture of neoliberalism and the push back against neo-isms
- Proposals that provoke science fictional imaginings and transgressions on the AAR's 2017 theme "Religion and the Most Vulnerable"
- Proposals for a possible tri-sponsored session with Sacred Texts and Ethics, and Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion invite paper (and panel) proposals at the nexus of sacred texts, science fiction and comic books, and hip hop culture. We invite proposals from a range of disciplinary and methodological approaches.

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, [ammonll@appstate.edu](mailto:ammonll@appstate.edu)

Chair - Busto, Rudy V., University of California, Santa Barbara, [rude@religion.ucsb.edu](mailto:rude@religion.ucsb.edu)

## Religion and Sexuality Unit

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### Call Text:

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 (1) an emphasis on empirical research and analysis, (2) an intentionally multidisciplinary and comparative religious focus, and (3) an interest in comparative international perspectives. We especially encourage interdisciplinary approaches, interest in gender, and strong attention to methodological issues. While we welcome papers that address theory we are especially interested in praxis-based theoretical analysis. Accordingly, this Unit welcomes papers on religion and sexuality, broadly conceptualized. We are particularly interested in papers addressing and analyzing the following themes in light of the AAR Presidential Theme 2017, Religion and the Most Vulnerable:

- Religion and Sexual Violence: We welcome papers that engage the important topic of Religion and Sexual Violence as it relates to a) Sexual assault/abuse, reproductive rights, homophobias and heterosexisms, ableism and targeted embodiments; b) the movement for Black Lives; c) regimes of bodily surveillance and policing.
- "Queer Gathering": We welcome papers that address queer theology and queer religious activism. We are particularly interested in papers engaging a) Islam and queer lives and b) interreligious dialogue/cross-faith conversations pertaining to queer theology and activism. Papers can also be focused around methodological and/or empirical issues/approaches.
- Papers for a possible author-meets-critics panel on Thelathia Nikki Young's *Black Queer Ethics, Family, and Philosophical Imagination* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), co-sponsored with the Queer Study in Religion Program Unit.
- Other proposals for papers, sessions, panels and/or book sessions in keeping with the general mission of the Unit are always welcome.

### 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 especially encourage interdisciplinary approaches, interest in gender (broadly defined), and strong attention to methodological issues.

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 - Leath, Jennifer S., Iliff School of Theology, [jennifer.s.leath@gmail.com](mailto:jennifer.s.leath@gmail.com)

Chair - Hoel, Nina, University of Oslo, [ninahoel@gmail.com](mailto:ninahoel@gmail.com)

## Religion and the Social Sciences Unit

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### Call Text:

The Religion and Social Science Unit is pleased to honor the AAR theme “Religion and the Most Vulnerable” and welcome papers on the following themes and topics: 1.) Immigration, politics, and sanctuary cities; 2.) Gentrification and urban religion; 3.) Religious and social activism in a Trump era; and 4.) Religion and the production of “neighbor” and “stranger.”

### 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 - Nabhan-Warren, Kristy, University of Iowa, [kristy-nabhan-warren@uiowa.edu](mailto:kristy-nabhan-warren@uiowa.edu)

Chair - Phillips, Nichole, Emory University, [nichole.r.phillips@emory.edu](mailto:nichole.r.phillips@emory.edu)

## Religion in Europe Unit

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### Call Text:

This unit analyzes religion in Europe or related to Europe in any historical period. We encourage interdisciplinary, interreligious, and comparative approaches to the topic. For the 2017 meeting we especially seek proposals related to one or more of the following themes:

- the effect of migration and the refugee crisis in Europe, including--but not limited to--its effect on religious discourse in relation to right-wing movements and/or its relationship to post-9/11 discourses on religion; the resurgence of religion and the shape of religious discourse in the context of a secular state; and the question of whether or not there is still a European identity toward which the other religion is contrasted;
- for the Annual Meeting's theme of "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," religion, religious-secular pluralism, and interreligious coalitions in relation to vulnerable subjectivities in Europe, including immigrants and LGBTQ communities, the latter especially in Central and Eastern Europe;

- in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, the way in which the Protestant Reformation affected the shape of European identity and its legacy on the shape of religious identity in Europe today;
- comparative approaches to Muslim headscarves in different European countries or between Europe and North America, including--but not limited to--how these approaches raise questions about policing women's bodies and attire by religion and the secular state (for a possible co-sponsored session with the Women in Religion unit).

This year a joint-sponsored session with the Men, Masculinities, and Religions (MMR) and Islam, Gender, Women (IGW) units will examine: Islamophobia, the body, and gendered/racialized policies of the state from a transnational perspective (including, but not limited to, European perspectives). As opposed to a traditional paper/panel setup, the session will be formed around a set of very short (6-7 minute) initial provocations/remarks that will serve as the foundation for subsequent discussion by session attendees seated at small discussion tables.

Therefore, for this joint-sponsored session, IGW, MMR, and RiE are not accepting proposals for standard full-length conference papers or for prearranged paper panels. Rather, we solicit proposals for short remarks that will serve as the basis for small group discussions. Possible topics for proposals include: state surveillance of Muslim communities; state policies in relation to gender binarization; gendered/sexualized practices of detention or torture; the production and circulation of images/representations of Muslim men as terrorists; headscarf/hijab/burkini controversies and legislation; gendered/sexualized hate crimes in the broader public; the mainstreaming of alt-right and white nationalist political movements and discourses; Muslim vulnerability or acquiescence to, negotiations with, and/or resistance to such discourses and practices; methodologies within the study of Islam, gender/race, the body, and the state; and methodologies for studying the intersections between Islamophobia, gender, femininity, and masculinity. Proposals addressing European contexts are encouraged.

#### 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 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 - von Stuckrad, Kocku, University of Groningen, [c.k.m.von.stuckrad@rug.nl](mailto:c.k.m.von.stuckrad@rug.nl)

Chair - Cutter, Elissa, Loyola Marymount University, [Elissa.Cutter@lmu.edu](mailto:Elissa.Cutter@lmu.edu)

## Religion in Premodern Europe and the Mediterranean Unit

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Call Text:

This Unit brings together scholars working on premodern Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in order to create a venue where religious phenomena can be considered comparatively. We invite paper and panel proposals on all subjects related to religion in medieval and early modern Europe and the Mediterranean. Individual papers might (and usually do) focus on one specific tradition, but presenters should be interested in engaging this material comparatively during the discussion period. Proposals that are themselves comparative in nature or that present novel approaches to the study of premodern religion are particularly welcome. This year, we encourage papers that explore the veneration of holy (or: especially virtuous) people in the premodern era. We are interested in how Jewish, Christian, and Islamic communities identify and celebrate such figures as well as how tales and other material evidence represent these figures as exemplars for others.

**Mission Statement:**

This Unit provides a venue for scholars of premodern Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to examine questions of comparison and influence in a geographically and temporally defined context.

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

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

Chair - Catlos, Brian, University of Colorado Boulder, [brian.catlos@colorado.edu](mailto:brian.catlos@colorado.edu)

Chair - Freidenreich, David, Colby College, [dfreiden@colby.edu](mailto:dfreiden@colby.edu)

## Religion in South Asia Unit

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**Call Text:**

RISA is currently seeking submissions for the 2017 AAR meeting. RISA's mission is to provide a venue for new research in the many religious cultures, texts, and histories of South Asia. We have a strong preference for papers sessions (not roundtables) as well as sessions in which the papers cover a range of traditions, regions, and languages of South Asia. The theme for the 2017 AAR is Religion and the Most Vulnerable, so panels related to this theme are also encouraged.

RISA only accepts prearranged paper sessions (consisting of 3 or 4 papers on a single theme). A standard AAR session has 6 participants: 4 paper presenters, a discussant or respondent, and a presider (150 minutes total). Current AAR policy mandates that one of RISA's allotted sessions be a shorter session of 5 participants, typically consisting of 3 paper presenters, a discussant, and a presider (90 minutes total). Please specify your preferred format in your submission. If you are looking for others to organize a papers session, please feel free to reach out to colleagues on the RISA listserv, or to contact the RISA co-chairs for assistance.

The one exception to RISA's preference for prearranged sessions is the New Directions in South Asian Religion panel, a 150-minute session dedicated to emerging scholarship. The RISA steering committee will only consider INDIVIDUAL paper submissions for this panel. Applicants for this panel must be: (1) doctoral students or recent grads from a Ph.D. programme in South Asian religions and (2) never have presented at the national AAR meeting. To apply, upload your individual paper proposal in the AAR's PAPERS system, explicitly labelled as a "New Directions," submission, and also email your proposal (and any other queries) to Dr. Steve Vose, convenor of the panel ([svose@flu.edu](mailto:svose@flu.edu)).

Some themes already identified as potential papers sessions are listed below. Please contact the session organizers for more details:

- Presence and Religion in South Asia: Nancy Martin [nmartin@chapman.edu](mailto:nmartin@chapman.edu)
- Inter-Religious Interactions: Abhishek Amar [amar@hamilton.edu](mailto:amar@hamilton.edu)
- Religion and Globalization in South Asia and Beyond: Drew Thomases [dthomases@sdsu.edu](mailto:dthomases@sdsu.edu)
- Non-violent resistance in South Asian Religion: Tim Dobe [dobetim@grinnell.edu](mailto:dobetim@grinnell.edu)
- Gandhian Afterlives: Tim Dobe [dobetim@grinnell.edu](mailto:dobetim@grinnell.edu)
- Urban Devotionalism, Hindus and Muslims: Afsar Mohamad [mamoha@upenn.edu](mailto:mamoha@upenn.edu)
- Religious Identities: Dean Accardi [dean.accardi@gmail.com](mailto:dean.accardi@gmail.com)
- Religious Nationalisms and Readings from the Past: Dean Accardi [dean.accardi@gmail.com](mailto:dean.accardi@gmail.com)
- Hindu Temples, Today and Tomorrow: Jack Hawley [jsh3@columbia.edu](mailto:jsh3@columbia.edu)
- Seeking Salvation: South Asian Paths to Immortality and Liberation: Finnian Gerety [finnian\\_moore-gerety@brown.edu](mailto:finnian_moore-gerety@brown.edu)
- Media and Technology in South Asian Religions: Finnian Gerety [finnian\\_moore-gerety@brown.edu](mailto:finnian_moore-gerety@brown.edu)
- Is Scripture Poetry and is Liberation Beautiful? Aesthetics and Theology in South Asian Religions: Jason Schwartz [khecara36@gmail.com](mailto:khecara36@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 - Pinkney, Andrea Marion, McGill University, [andrea.pinkney@mcgill.ca](mailto:andrea.pinkney@mcgill.ca)

Chair - Stainton, Hamsa, University of Kansas, [hamsa.stainton@gmail.com](mailto:hamsa.stainton@gmail.com)

## Religion in Southeast Asia Unit

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Call Text:

The Religion in Southeast Asia Program Unit invites proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtables.

Following extensive discussion on the steering committee, and inspired by the annual theme for 2017 – viz. Religion and the Most Vulnerable – this year will mark the beginning of a broader effort to cultivate a greater inclusiveness in the range of topics and participants involved in our Unit’s activities.

With this end in mind, we welcome contributions on any topic pertaining to religion in Southeast Asia, and will favor submissions from both underrepresented groups and those who have never before presented in this Program Unit. We are particularly interested in papers and sessions that explore the varying media and means through which people create and maintain, as well as question and challenge, religiously-laden vulnerabilities.

Possible topics and formats might include, for example, a roundtable discussion on inclusiveness and diversity in the academy, with specific reference to religion in Southeast Asia. Another possibility would be an organized panel on queer spiritualities, or the mounting challenges faced by LGBTQIA scholars in religious studies—or, again, new forms of religious bigotry and persecution in Southeast Asia, with a comparative eye to developments in Europe and America.

We are also hoping to co-sponsor a session with the Religious Conversions Unit, addressing the theme of “Conversion in Southeast Asian Contexts”.

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: 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 - Fox, Richard, Heidelberg University, [rfox@eth.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:rfox@eth.uni-heidelberg.de)

Chair - Angeles, Vivienne, La Salle University, [angeles@lasalle.edu](mailto:angeles@lasalle.edu)

## Religion in the American West Unit

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Call Text:  
American West Imaginaries: Frontiers, the Future, Border Control, and Protests

The frontier, as it is imagined in the American West, has held possibilities for numerous religious people, and has served as inspiration for ideations of a better life. However, the West has also been the site of immense tragedy due to these imaginaries, as the implementation of utopian landscapes rests on exclusion, dispossession, border control, and other acts of systemic and physical violence.

Drawing on this paradoxical relationship between the vision and its realization, we solicit paper and panel proposals on the multiple representations of the American West as the place of the future, both by religious groups and by groups adopting the language of purity and promise. What religious futures have been imagined in the West? How has the American West served as a rhetorical flashpoint for imagining a future predicated on exclusion and violence? What secular futures have the West inspired? How has the reality of the West's indigenous population challenged the implantation of imagined futures? How have racial, ethnic, gender, and religious identities been co-constituted in the space of imaginaries on the frontier? How have protests shaped the religious landscape of the West?

We are particularly interested in papers exploring minority religious traditions and in papers that examine the role of gender in shaping the rhetorics of the future, connecting with the presidential theme of religion and the most vulnerable.

Please note that the format for the session will feature pre-circulated papers as is the long custom of this unit.

We are also interested in papers for a co-sponsored session with the New Religious Movements units around the topic of Futures and Frontiers of Religion, considering the questions: what role do violence, exclusion, and/or extremism play in the building of--or failure to build--utopias?

### Mission Statement:

The Religion in the American West Unit is a forum for graduate students, independent scholars, and faculty who situate their work regionally in the North American West, broadly conceived. The study of religion in this region allows scholars to use a broad array of methodologies (historical, anthropological, literary, sociological, and others) to explore the most pressing questions in the field of American religion and in Religious Studies more generally. These include, but are not limited to: the history of empire and colonialism; the connections between religion and violence; the construction and deployment of racial, ethnic, gender,

and sexual identities; transnational movement of people and ideas; religion and the natural and built environments; myth-making and its role in the construction and critique of nationalist ideologies; and the development of the category of religion. The purpose of this subfield is not to remain in the American West, to define the West, or to argue that religion in the West is unique. Instead, by situating scholarship regionally, scholars of the American West are able to develop theories and methods that can be useful interpretive lenses for other regions defined by land, transnationalism, migrations, diversity, and colonialism. Moreover, the Unit supports the development of a rigorous intellectual community by pre-circulating papers in advance of the national meeting and maintaining a blog.

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 - Hendrickson, Brett, Lafayette College, [hendribr@lafayette.edu](mailto:hendribr@lafayette.edu)

Chair - Denison, Brandi, University of North Florida, [b.denison@unf.edu](mailto:b.denison@unf.edu)

## Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit

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Call Text:

Affect theory and other critical theories of bodies and emotions: a comparative harangue.

What is the relationship between affect/emotion, culture, and religion? How does affect theory compare to other approaches to the body in the humanities? How does an attention to specific affects—like rage, passion, or love—shape our analysis of religion and other social formations? For possible co-sponsorship with the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion unit.

The emotional logic of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia as discourses of shared vulnerability.

How do they create vulnerability through emotions? What is the emotional structure of being made vulnerable? How do these emotional contours interact with systems of power? For a possible co-sponsorship with the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide unit.

Pedagogy and affect.

How do affects shape bodies, selves, and subjects? How do they condition religions and other cultural products? How are they channeled in the classroom? What is the role of media--old or new--in marshaling transformative affect?

Misleading affects.

How do we assess affects? Should they be seen as true or false? Are they pre-divided into good and bad? When affects dazzle us--with spectacle or beauty, for example--what forces are marshaled and what effects are created? How do these questions intersect with issues of religion and power?

Exhaustion.

What are the affects in the wake of resistance? How do we use affect to revivify religion, politics, or culture? How do affects wear us down?

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 passionate 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

Leadership:

Chair - Schaefer, Donovan, University of Oxford, [donovan.schaefer@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:donovan.schaefer@theology.ox.ac.uk)

Chair - Hamner, M. Gail, Syracuse University, [mghamner@syr.edu](mailto:mghamner@syr.edu)

## Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit

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Call Text:

We welcome all individual and panel proposals that engage postcolonial perspectives in the study of religion. In addition, we are interested in two specific topics for the 2017 annual meeting and the proposed theme of "Religion and the Most Vulnerable":

### Teaching Resistance and Resilience in the Classroom and Beyond

This panel is in response to the call by the AAR leadership to work against threats posed by "emboldened discrimination against racial and ethnic minority groups; threats to the undocumented; marginalization of many of the religious groups that we study; assaults on facts, inquiry, and truth telling" (<https://www.aarweb.org/about/after-the-election-statement-from-the-aar-b...>).

We are particularly interested in proposals by scholars engaged in resistance movements and the teaching of anti-imperial non-violent direct action. It is our contention that in the wake of #BLM and other resistance movements our roles as teachers are becoming particularly important for the ways in which we can motivate student participation and strategize against institutional oppression or quietism. It is our hope that the proposals will have both practical suggestions and will include reflections by activist-scholars on fighting the good fight. Our goal is to encourage faculty and graduate students to activate student populations to resist a culture of vitriolic public rhetoric and racism, and to strategize about resources and practical know-how of being. We are particularly keen to have a diversity of voices from public, private, union and non-union institutions.

We are also looking for proposals for a co-sponsorship with the Body and Religion Unit on the subject of: "Power, Meaning, and Identity: Colonial, Colored, and Gendered Bodies". Our hope is to interpret the call broadly and tie it in with the annual theme "Religion and the Most Vulnerable."

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 - Foody, Kathleen, College of Charleston, [foodykm@cofc.edu](mailto:foodykm@cofc.edu)

Chair - Hussain, Syed Adnan, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, [syedadnan.hussain@smu.ca](mailto:syedadnan.hussain@smu.ca)

## Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit

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Call Text:

The Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit invites proposals on the following topics. Please note that we strongly encourage the use of visual media in presentations and ask that all proposals indicate whether (and how) visuals will be used. We also ask that proposals be clear about their theoretical and methodological approaches/perspectives.

- *Stranger Things*  
We seek proposals that reflect on religion in relation to the original Netflix series, *Stranger Things*. Proposals may involve any notion of "religion" as it connects to the series' story/text as well as to its aesthetic/production aspects (visuals, music, sound, editing, etc.). We also encourage proposals on the series that consider the impact of new viewing platforms on religion and visual culture, [i.e., the shift from broadcast to narrowcast (watching video through streaming media on portable devices rather than on broadcast television or in movie theaters)]. Note: proposals would necessarily involve only season 1 of *Stranger Things*, but as season 2 will be out before the AAR's Annual Meeting in Boston we would like to see references to it as well in the final presentations.
- Superheroes and Mortality  
The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit and the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit are looking to mount a co-sponsored panel on "Superheroes and Mortality." The emphasis for this session would be on the superhero genre (in comic books, film, television, or affiliated media) and issues of mortality, mourning, funeral rites, the hereafter, resurrection, reincarnation, thanatology, and eschatology. Submitters are encouraged to take the theme literally (i.e., we are not asking for figurative "superheroes" nor metaphorical "death"). Proposals reaching beyond the English-speaking U.S. market are especially welcome.
- Visual Culture and Vulnerability  
How does visual culture (all forms: film, photography, social media, graphic art, television, etc.) relate to religion and situations of social and/or personal vulnerability? In what ways does visual culture function to construct notions of vulnerability? How does it appear to empower those who are vulnerable in some sense? How does it make them even more vulnerable? We are interested in proposals that explore these and related questions regarding recent visual culture productions. Relevant examples from 2016 would include the films *Moonlight* and *Loving*, social media involving the Dakota Access Pipeline protests at Standing Rock, Third Cinema, images and videos from white nationalist/"alt-right" groups, and the television production of *Hairspray*, live.

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 - Reedy Solano, Jeanette, California State University, Fullerton, [jsolano@fullerton.edu](mailto:jsolano@fullerton.edu)

Chair - Derry, Ken, University of Toronto, [ken.derry@utoronto.ca](mailto:ken.derry@utoronto.ca)

## Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit

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Call Text:

In keeping with the 2017 Presidential Theme "Religion and the Most Vulnerable", we seek submissions addressing the problem of vulnerability and marginalization of minority religious and ethnic groups. What resources can we draw from the analysis of historical genocides to help address vulnerable populations in the present? In addition to papers addressing this broad theme, we are particularly interested in receiving submissions for the following panels:

A panel on the future of Godwin's Law: Are historical comparisons useful for identifying political vulnerability in the present, or do they serve, instead, to curtail debate and contribute to a "victim mentality"?

For a co-sponsored session with the Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit, a panel titled "Teaching Holocaust and Genocide in This Time", to address issues of pedagogy and current world politics.

For a co-sponsored session with the Religion, Affect and Emotion Unit, a panel addressing the emotional logic of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia as discourses of shared vulnerability. How do they create vulnerability through emotions? What is the emotional structure of being made vulnerable? How do these emotional contours interact with systems of power?

For a co-sponsored session with the Religion, Social Conflict and Peace Unit, the Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit, and the Liberation Theologies Unit, a session prompted by the 2016 Presidential election, since which the United States has witnessed an unsettling increase in hate incidents. While historical analogies are imperfect, scholars of the Holocaust and genocide are starting to see unsettling trends in popular and political discourse reminiscent of trends in authoritarian and fascist societies. The language and culture of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are important sites for scholarly inquiry, and this panel seeks papers addressing the intersections of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (1) to explore how classical tropes of religious bigotry are being re-oriented to a new political context; (2) to develop new language and methodologies that offer critical perspectives on religious bigotry and violence; (3) to explore innovative interreligious strategies for addressing religious bigotry, and (4) to explore how besieged religious communities can work together to preserve and protect the dignity and integrity of all people.

Mission Statement:

This Unit provides an academic forum to integrate the analysis of the Holocaust with past and ongoing problems of genocide around the globe. It asks critical questions about the implications of these histories and their legacies for the study of religion, building on Jewish and Christian theological, literary, ethical, ritual, and philosophical responses to the Holocaust, and opening conversations with responses to genocide from other communities, such as Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Indigenous peoples.

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 - Vincent, Alana, University of Chester, [alana.vincent@gmail.com](mailto:alana.vincent@gmail.com)

Chair - Temoney, Kate, University of South Florida, [temoney@yahoo.com](mailto:temoney@yahoo.com)

## Religion, Media, and Culture Unit

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Call Text:

The Religion, Media, and Culture Unit invites individual presentations, paper/multimedia research presentation sessions, and roundtable proposals on the following themes:

- Surveillance and Community (for a co-sponsored session with the Study of Islam)
- Pedagogy and Scholarship in a Post-Truth Age
- Media, Religion, and the Cult of Personality
- Religion in Virtual and Augmented Realities (for a co-sponsored session with Video Gaming and Religion)
- Religion, Media, and the Most Vulnerable: Media and/as Resistance, New Media Entrepreneurship, etc.
- Judaism, spirituality, secularism, gender and/or sexuality in the television series "Transparent"
- Animals in the Media (for a co-sponsored session with Animals and Religion)

Note: 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 - Aghapour, Andrew, University of North Carolina, [andrewaghapour@gmail.com](mailto:andrewaghapour@gmail.com)

## Religion, Memory, History Unit

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Call Text:

- We are especially interested this year in memories of white nostalgia in the global context of “values voters” and how they render others vulnerable. In the context of the global rise of whitening nostalgia, we invite papers on the forgetting and erasure of other peoples, cultures, traditions, and histories. In what ways are communities vulnerable to whitening nostalgia? How do people resist forgetting and erasure?
- Our second theme this year focuses on memories of movement, migration, and landscapes. How are movement and migration remembered and commemorated? How do they intersect with the religious memories of the vulnerable? How do these memories map on to and reshape earlier memories of movement? How is ‘home’ remembered? How are transit sites, spaces, and places represented?
- Frederic Jameson among others uncovers religion within science fiction as a mediatory space, an arbiter between vulnerabilities and precarity. What is the function of religion within franchises like Star Wars, Star Trek, and Westworld? Selected papers will be considered for publication in a special edition of Sociological Imagination.
- We also welcome other proposals that use memory studies approaches to the analysis of religion.

The Religion, Memory, History unit welcomes individual paper proposals as well as full panel submissions.

Mission Statement:

This Unit explores the construction of narratives of the past as memory and history in relation to religious practices, ideologies, and subjectivities. The role of memory and history in the formation of religious subjectivities calls for examination within a comparative context, to allow for an intercultural and interdisciplinary exploration of its forms and contexts, and to provide engagement with theoretical and methodological concerns across traditions.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Hassan, Mona, Duke University, [mona.hassan@duke.edu](mailto:mona.hassan@duke.edu)

Chair - Langille, Tim, Arizona State University, [tim.langille@gmail.com](mailto:tim.langille@gmail.com)

## Religion, Sport, and Play Unit

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Call Text:

The Religion, Sport, and Play Unit invite proposals for papers on the intersection of religion, sport/play, and emotion. For players and spectators, games can evoke a range of emotions. How have religious communities harnessed this power of emotion, and to what ends? What connections exist between the emotions of sport/play and cultural protest movements? How might theoretical tools like attention to power, affect, and post-colonialism shed light on instances of sport/play, emotion, and religion? Papers that focus on the location of the meeting (Boston, MA) and/or the theme of the 2017 meeting (Religion and the Most Vulnerable) are especially welcome. In addition to the issues/questions above, the Religion, Sport, and Play Unit is continually interested in proposals that critically examine religious institutions and ideologies as they relate to sport, play, and games.

The Religion Sport, and Play Unit and the Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Unit invite proposals for papers for a possible joint session that explores the complex intersection of sport/play and the use of various technologies to make the bodies of athletes, players, and gamers even “better.” Original work that probes the social, political, moral, and religious dimensions of these issues are especially encouraged.

Successful proposals for both sessions will address historical or contemporary cases and contribute to a range of disciplinary perspectives and diverse religious traditions. Proposals should clearly state the main argument of the paper and summarize evidence used to support the argument.

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: 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 - Remillard, Arthur, Saint Francis University, [aremillard@francis.edu](mailto:aremillard@francis.edu)

Chair - Nanko-Fernandez, Carmen Marie, Catholic Theological Union, [cnanko@ctu.edu](mailto:cnanko@ctu.edu)

## Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit

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Call Text:

Our emphasis this year is “interdisciplinary and trans-hemispheric approaches to the study of religion in the Latina/o Americas.” We welcome any and all papers that address this broad theme.

Additionally, we are interested in papers (or proposals for panels) that might address any of the following sub-themes:

- In light of this year's AAR theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable" in light of Trump's anti-immigration platform. How does religion among U.S. Latina/os and/or Latin Americans address new levels of vulnerability?
- "Fe and Fidel." How should we approach and/or re-consider Cuban and Cuban-American religion in light of the death of Cuba's leader of six decades?
- "Lived religion" in Latina America and Latina/o communities in the U.S.
- Religion, Resistance, and Health. How do U.S. Latino/as and Latin Americans mobilize religious practices and worldviews so as to regain forms of health -- whether physical, mental, spiritual, or ecological?
- New Books. Our units often dedicate a session to a discussion of "New Books" in the field. 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 issue(s) are raised by placing the books in conversation with one another?)

Along with the Theology and Religious Reflection Unit, are also organizing an invited panel that considers the legacy of Virgilio Elizondo.

#### 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: 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 – Tirres, Chris, DePaul University, [ctirres@gmail.com](mailto:ctirres@gmail.com)

Chair – Schmidt, Jalane D., University of Virginia, [jds7b@virginia.edu](mailto:jds7b@virginia.edu)

Chair – Scheper Hughes, Jennifer, University of California Riverside, [jhughes@ucr.edu](mailto:jhughes@ucr.edu)

Chair – Gonzalez Maldonado, Michelle, University of Miami, [mmaldonado@miami.edu](mailto:mmaldonado@miami.edu)

## Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit

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### 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. We ask that proposals address the socio-political context of the topic, as well as theoretical and analytical framework(s): How does this analysis help us to understand religions and “healing” in new ways?

This year, we are particularly interested in the following themes:

- 2017 AAR Theme: Religion and the Most Vulnerable
- Environmental Protection and Health
- State of the Field: Past, Present, and Future of the Studies of Religions, Medicines, and Healing
- We invite paper proposals that address issues related to the Most Vulnerable in our global society in the context of indigenous medicine(s) and healing, for a joint session with the Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit. We ask that proposals address the socio-political context of the topic, as well as theoretical and analytical framework(s). We plan to co-sponsor the session with the Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, with pre-distributed full papers (full papers due online Nov 1, 2017), a brief presentation of each paper, and facilitated discussion.
- We also welcome paper proposals for a possible joint session with the Religion and Disability Studies Unit and the Childhood Studies and Religion Unit dealing with issues surrounding normatively-informed medical, psychological, mental health, and religious interventions to make the bodies and/or minds of children and young people with disabilities “whole” from a wide variety of perspectives. We plan to co-sponsor the session with pre-distributed full papers (full papers due online Nov 1, 2017), a brief presentation of each paper, and facilitated discussion.

We encourage graduate students with ongoing research projects in the field of Religions, Medicines, and Healing to apply for mentor-pairing. Graduate students will provide full drafts of their papers several months in advance, and after being paired with a Mentor, will have the opportunity to receive in-depth feedback and guidance on their work between April-November, 2017. At the 2017 AAR, we will host a roundtable session for the mentor-mentee pairs to present together and share their insights—the graduate students on their research, and the mentors on the pedagogical aspect of the process.

### 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 - Wu, Emily, Dominican University of California, [emily.wu@dominican.edu](mailto:emily.wu@dominican.edu)

Chair - Barnes, Linda L., Boston University, [lbarnes@bu.edu](mailto:lbarnes@bu.edu)

## Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit

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Call Text:

This unit welcomes individual papers and paper session proposals (presider, 3-4 papers, and respondent) on intersections of religion with violence, social conflict, and peace. For the 2017 Annual Meeting, we are particularly interested in proposals that address the following topics and intersections:

- Emergent practices of resistance and peacebuilding and their relationship to religion (e.g., digital solidarity, unsanctioned actions and actors, unlikely partners or coalitions, religiously grounded or religiously inspired resistance outside of institutional religion)
- Indigenous practices of resistance and peacebuilding
- Pedagogical practices for peacebuilding in and through religious studies courses
- Beyond the “religious actor” model: structural activism for peace
- Trauma healing as part of the work of peacebuilding
- Freedom of the press in contexts of social conflict; the role of journalism in peacebuilding; the role of religion in suppressing or defending freedom of the press
- For a potential co-sponsorship with Religion and Politics Unit: We are interested in papers addressing the international rise of populist, nationalist, or anti-globalization forces or movements in the U.S., UK, France, Italy, Turkey, the Philippines, and elsewhere, including, in particular, we seek analyses of the religious dimensions of the populist moment.

- For a potential co-sponsorship with Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit and the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit: Since the 2016 Presidential election, the United States has witnessed an unsettling increase in hate incidents. While historical analogies are imperfect, scholars of the Holocaust and genocide are starting to see unsettling trends in popular and political discourse reminiscent of trends in authoritarian and fascist societies. The language and culture of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are important sites for scholarly inquiry. Papers in this panel will focus on the intersections of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (1) to explore how classical tropes of religious bigotry are being re-oriented to a new political context; (2) to develop new language and methodologies that offer critical perspectives on religious bigotry and violence; (3) to explore innovative interreligious strategies for addressing religious bigotry, and (4) to explore how besieged religious communities can work together to preserve and protect the dignity and integrity of all people.

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 during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Marshall, Ellen Ott, Emory University, [ellen.marshall@emory.edu](mailto:ellen.marshall@emory.edu)

Chair - Omer, Atalia, University of Notre Dame, [aomer1@nd.edu](mailto:aomer1@nd.edu)

## Religious Conversions Unit

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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 panel topics proposed at the 2016 business meeting (the person whose name is listed in parentheses has expressed an interest in organizing the panel). They are:

- The somatics/embodiment of conversion, or "Reason" vs. "Marrow" (Intuition/Instinct) in conversion (Terry Rey; [trey@temple.edu](mailto:trey@temple.edu))

- Conversion/deconversion in the contemporary American political context (Linda Mercadante; [LMercadante@mtso.edu](mailto:LMercadante@mtso.edu))
- Social, religious, legal, and governmental legitimization processes, or, who gets to decide if/when a conversion is “legitimate” or “real” (Possible co-sponsorship with Law, Religion, and Culture Unit; Alex Hwang; [hwangalex@yahoo.com](mailto:hwangalex@yahoo.com))
- Conversion in Southeast Asia (Possible co-sponsorship with Religion in Southeast Asia Unit; Vivienne Angeles; [angeles@lasalle.edu](mailto:angeles@lasalle.edu))
- Conversion in contexts of social/government restrictions (Taunalyn Rutherford; [taunalynr@gmail.com](mailto:taunalynr@gmail.com))
- Conversions/deconversions of Academics and in relationship to their areas of scholarship (Marc Pugliese; [marc.pugliese@saintleo.edu](mailto:marc.pugliese@saintleo.edu))
- Conversion and Mormonism (Possible co-sponsorship with Mormon Studies Unit; Colleen McDannell; [Colleen.McD@m.cc.utah.edu](mailto:Colleen.McD@m.cc.utah.edu))

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Bauman, Chad, Butler University, [cbauman@butler.edu](mailto:cbauman@butler.edu)

Chair - Pugliese, Marc, Saint Leo University, [marcpug@gmail.com](mailto:marcpug@gmail.com)

Ricoeur Unit

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Call Text:

Moral, Political, and Narrative Responses to the Current Climate of Crisis

We are living in troubling times. Anxieties about a globalized market, economic instability, international migration, religious plurality, and persistent divisions and inequality have given way to iconoclastic politics, the resurgence of racialized discourse, and religious intolerance, as well as revolutionary justice movements, all of it fueled by the technological panopticon of social media. How should we respond to this climate of crisis, as we currently understand it from both a local and global perspective?

- **Morality and Politics.** On the 25th publication anniversary of *Oneself as Another*, we seek paper proposals that address the moral and/or political dynamics of our current global situation. We are particularly interested in papers that critically engage themes drawn from Ricoeur's work – positively or negatively, directly or indirectly, on their own or in conversation with other movements or approaches – such as the capable human, the intersubjective self, ethics of recognition, ideology and utopia, memory and forgiveness, etc.
- **Narrative Identity, "Identity Politics," and National Identity.** Paper proposals will be considered for a co-sponsored session with the Religion and Humanism Unit. We are particularly interested in papers that draw on or compare Ricoeur's concepts of narrative identity and of the self, of memory and its political use, and of traditions in the public sphere to other such theories, in order to discuss how politics and politicians construct narratives about what it means to be human within the context of narratives of national identity.
- **Vulnerability.** Paper proposals will be considered for a co-sponsored session with the Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit. We are especially interested in papers that address Ricoeur and/or Bonhoeffer in relation to this year's conference theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable."

Mission Statement:

The purpose of this Unit is to promote the work of Paul Ricoeur within the broad fields of theology and religious studies. 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 — as a form of academic fandom — 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 until after final acceptance/rejection

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Sohn, Michael, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, [mikedwsohn@gmail.com](mailto:mikedwsohn@gmail.com)

Chair - Reynhout, Kenneth A., Bethel University, St. Paul, [kenneth.reynhout@gmail.com](mailto:kenneth.reynhout@gmail.com)

Ritual Studies Unit

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Call Text:

The Ritual Studies Unit encourages submissions from scholars who propose innovative approaches to the study of ritual and foster theoretical sophistication in the interdisciplinary study of ritual. Although we are open to reviewing any proposals that enhance the academic study of ritual, this year we are looking for papers and panels that engage with the following topics:

- **Rituals of Resistance:** We are interested in proposals which examine ritual efficacy in contexts of political crisis or change. In particular, we look for proposals that stress the role of ritual in social transformation. We are specifically looking for studies on religious festivals challenging or resisting statehood.
- **Ritual and Vulnerability:** In alignment with the theme of religion and the most vulnerable, we invite proposals from scholars of religion and ritual that examine the rituals of the socially and politically marginalized, including ritual and disability or rituals in transgender communities. We are considering a co-sponsored potential session with the Religion and Disability Studies Unit.
- **Rituals of Aging:** We encourage paper proposals that engage in research on rites of passage marking the phases of aging, including rituals of retirement in different religious traditions. We are considering a co-sponsorship with the Mormon Studies Unit.
- **Ritual Studies in Teaching Religion:** We are interested in proposals examining the representation of rituals and ritual studies in religious studies college textbooks and how rituals and ritual studies are taught in undergraduate courses.
- **Aesthetics of Ritual:** We are interested in proposals which discuss issues of an aesthetic approach to the study of ritual, including ritual and the senses, the role of poetry in rituals, and ritual smell and touch.
- **Interrituality in Middle Eastern Christianity, Islam, and Judaism:** The Ritual Studies Unit and the Middle Eastern Christianity Unit are issuing a Call for Papers that solicits proposals related to the interrulturality of religious life in the Middle East—particularly of Christians with other religious communities. Topics of interrulturality could include liturgy and liturgical practices, pilgrimage, or any other way that Middle Eastern Christian practices participate in, or resemble, the practices of other communities. This call for papers is open to research in all academic disciplines and all historical time periods; we are particularly interested in proposals that discuss the ways in which rituals serve as markers of identity and means of appropriation in the Middle East.
- We are interested in individual paper proposals as well as proposals for full panels. Panel proposals would need to include full proposals of individual papers for review. Proposals that do not indicate their body of evidence and their method of investigation and analysis are unlikely to be considered. All proposals will be reviewed anonymously and judged based on the clarity and structure of the argument.

**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. To learn more about this Unit, visit our Website at <http://www.ritualstudies.org>.

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

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS



Leadership:

Chair - Pike, Sarah M., California State University, Chico, [spike@csuchico.edu](mailto:spike@csuchico.edu)

Chair - Kreinath, Jens, Wichita State University, [jens.kreinath@gmail.com](mailto:jens.kreinath@gmail.com)

## Roman Catholic Studies Unit

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Call Text:

The Roman Catholic Studies Unit invites submissions on diverse subjects in Catholic Studies, but especially the following topics:

- **American Politics:** Approximately sixty percent of white Catholics voted for Donald Trump in the U.S. presidential election of 2016, while around eighty percent of Latino/as, many of whom are Catholic, voted for Hillary Clinton. What does this say about the electoral politics of today's American Catholics? How does this result affect Catholic participation in state and local politics? How do other factors like race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality play a role in the political identities of Catholics? We invite papers that reflect on reasons for this electoral outcome and its implications for the future.
- **Global Migration:** More than sixty-five million people are displaced around the world today. We invite papers that consider the involvement of Catholics in this global crisis, both as refugees and as those who reject or accept refugees into their communities. What are some theological positions on the treatment of refugees? What historical precedents might shed light on current circumstances? Are there specific examples of Catholic responses to refugee crises in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, as well as debates about the status of refugees in the United States and other parts of the world?
- **Urban Catholicism:** With Boston, Massachusetts, as the site of the Annual Meeting, we are reminded of the legacy of ethnic Catholic enclaves in many U.S. urban centers. We invite papers that address the historical, anthropological, and theological ramifications of urban life for Catholics in the past, present, and future. What can we learn by comparing and contrasting studies of urban Catholic communities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with those of the twenty-first century? Is there a way to think comparatively about the urban experiences of Catholics in Europe, Africa, South America, and North America? Is there something unique about the development of Catholic beliefs, practices, and institutions in urban environments? How might scholars apply their knowledge of urban Catholicism to suburban and rural settings?
- **Queering Catholicism:** What is queer about Catholicism? How are some Catholics queering the religious tradition of their birth and/or choice? What performative qualities of Catholicism make the Catholic Church a prism through which to explore queer theory? We invite papers that consider the historical, theological, and ethical dimensions of sexuality and identity politics in the Catholic Church, with particular attention to the ways in which queer theory might enrich or disrupt other disciplinary modes of interrogating what it means to be Catholic.
- We are especially 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 individuals who are developing individual papers, paper sessions, or roundtable proposals to answer questions, discuss ideas, and help shape final submissions.

Mission Statement:

This Unit provides a scholarly forum to study the global Roman Catholic community. Consequently, 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 - Pasquier, Michael, Louisiana State University, [mpasquier@lsu.edu](mailto:mpasquier@lsu.edu)

## Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit

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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 questions:

- Religion and Science Fiction, Sacred Texts and Ethics, and Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion invite paper (and panel) proposals at the nexus of sacred texts, science fiction and comic books, and hip hop culture. We invite proposals from a range of disciplinary and methodological approaches, and proposals that deal with each of these themes in various degrees. The inclusion of sacred texts may be manifest in a variety of ways, explicit and implicit.
- Populist sentiment in religious texts, or the use of religious sources for populist ends
- Hermeneutics and Reformation (in any religious tradition). This theme marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, but extends to reformist movements in any religious community.
- Texts and the modern nation-state
- Sacred texts between Religious Studies and Theology, particularly as sources for ethical or political reflection
- 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 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 - Filler, Emily, Earlham College, [filleem@earlham.edu](mailto:filleem@earlham.edu)

Chair - Phillips, Elizabeth, Westcott House, [erp31@cam.ac.uk](mailto:erp31@cam.ac.uk)

## Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction Unit

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Call Text:

Formerly known as *The Bible, Theology, and Postmodernity Group*, this unit now works within the exciting and more capacious intersection of sacred texts, contemporary theory, and theological construction.

- Firstly, our call is an open call for papers. We welcome paper and panel proposals by theologians and biblical scholars and other scholars of sacred texts. We welcome proposals from scholars working on a range of themes from postcolonial, critical race, queer, and ecocritical perspectives on theory, theological construction, and sacred texts. Contemporary or emerging themes in constructive theology are especially sought after.
- The Liberation Theologies Unit and Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction Unit call for paper or panel proposals for a co-sponsored session specifically working with sacred texts, theory, and theology in contemporary liberation and social justice movements. We especially welcome proposals that think about the role of sacred texts informing water protectors at Standing Rock (resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline), contemporary use of theology and sacred texts in #BlackLivesMatter, or other global liberation movements. We mean "texts" in broad definition to mean anything from biblical studies to anything that can be "read" or "interpreted" visually, orally, literarily, etc. We also welcome theological construction that thinks from, alongside, or in the wake of these social justice movements. What texts motivate liberation? What creative theological transformation happens in the textual space of social justice movements? How are new texts created and what are some new "sacred texts" emerging from these movements?
- Finally, in addition to these calls, the STTTC unit will host an invited book review panel on Shelly Rambo's forthcoming book *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma* (Baylor University Press, 2017). We encourage you to keep an eye out for announcements of our panel on this exciting work. According to *Resurrecting Wounds*, "The doubting Thomas story is often told as a story about the veracity and triumph of Christian faith. And yet it is a wound story. Interpretations of this gospel account reflect Christianity's unease with wounds that remain on the body of the risen Jesus. By returning readers to this familiar passage in the Gospel of John, this book expands the scope of the Upper Room. The powerful biblical images of resurrection—encounters with wounds, the invitation to touch, and the formation of a community—present visions of truth-telling and of healing that meet the pressing questions of wounds surfacing in the midst of life. While traditional accounts of resurrection in Christian theology have focused on the afterlife, this book forges a theology of resurrection wounds in the 'afterliving.'"

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 - Erickson, Jacob, Trinity College Dublin, [jacobjerrickson@gmail.com](mailto:jacobjerrickson@gmail.com)

Chair - Grau, Marion S., MF Norwegian School of Theology, [marion.grau@gmail.com](mailto:marion.grau@gmail.com)

## Schleiermacher Unit

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Call Text:

The Schleiermacher Unit will host a panel discussion on the theme, "God, Grace, and History: Schleiermacher in Reformed Theology." Invited panelists will include recent authors Anette Hagan (*Eternal Blessedness for All? A Historical-Systematic Examination of Friedrich Schleiermacher's Reinterpretation of Predestination*, 2013), Shelli Poe (*Essential Trinitarianism: Schleiermacher as Trinitarian Theologian*, 2017), Zachary Purvis (*Theology and the University in Nineteenth Century Germany*, 2016), and Kevin Vander Schel (*Embedded Grace: Christ, History, and the Reign of God in Schleiermacher's Dogmatics*, 2013). Paul Nimmo (University of Aberdeen) and Paul Jones (University of Virginia) will briefly synthesize the arguments of these works and raise questions for the authors and audience to discuss.

To mark the recent publication of the first ever English-language critical edition of Friedrich Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), the Schleiermacher Unit and the Christian Systematic Theology Unit invite paper proposals for a co-sponsored session on Schleiermacher's theology. We welcome proposals for analytical or constructive (but not strictly historical) papers that treat Schleiermacher's work in *Christian Faith*. Potential themes include, but are not limited to: the relationship between piety and doctrine, questions of tradition and authority, and the classical loci of systematic theology, and the potential bearing of this new translation of *Christian Faith* (by Tice, Kelsey, and Lawler) on scholarship. We especially welcome proposals that explore what Schleiermacher's substantive arguments in *Christian Faith* could contribute to contemporary conversations in theology.

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 - Poe, Shelli, Millsaps College, [poesm@millsaps.edu](mailto:poesm@millsaps.edu)

Chair - Waggoner, Ed, Brite Divinity School, [ed.waggoner@tcu.edu](mailto:ed.waggoner@tcu.edu)

## Science, Technology, and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

Vulnerable Populations, Science, Technology, and Religion

Given the AAR's 2017 theme on vulnerable populations we are particularly interested in papers related to this theme and the nexus of science, technology, and religion. For instance, papers might explore scientific approaches to studying vulnerability that relate to studies of religion, technologies or ways of understanding science that may alleviate or exacerbate vulnerabilities (e.g., technologies of climate engineering, medicine), or the ways that methodologies in religion and science have or could consider vulnerable populations.

The Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit and the Science, Technology, and Religion Unit seek papers for a co-sponsored session entitled *Religio Ex Machina: Machines and other technologies as a part of the cultural history of the study of religion*. How have particular technologies (e.g. cameras, engines, fMRI machines) influenced the study of religion. How have "machines" (widely conceived) engendered new approaches to the study of religion? We intend to use a roundtable format for this session in which panelists give short, 5-7 minute position papers before the discussion.

Enhancing Life

Life in the 21st century benefits from technological advances in the sciences. Most technologies, ranging from medical to communication devices, from transportation to data management systems promise to enhance life. And yet as we have learned over the last centuries, technology can also endanger life. We are especially interested in papers that address some of the following questions: "From the side of ethics, how can we judge technological advances?" alongside the hermeneutical question "What visions of an enhanced life are embedded and presupposed in certain technologies?" And: "How do technological visions resonate with specific religious conceptions of enhancing life?" This session will be co-sponsored by the Religion and Humanism and Science, Technology, and Religion Units.

On the Future of Science, Technology, and Religion

What theories and methods do scholars need to deploy in order to discern and engage with future directions for science, technology, and religion? In the next ten to thirty years, what will be the best way to approach key topics, ideas, discoveries, and problems at the nexus of these three disciplines? These two questions are intended to be open-ended so that the papers submitted can answer them from a variety of religious, technological, and scientific methodologies and perspectives. Our plan is to pre-circulate the papers. In the session, we will have participants summarize their ideas so that we can engage in more discussion than is generally the case.

We also welcome high-quality proposals or panels on other topics related to the unit's overall themes.

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 - Cootsona, Greg, California State University, Chico, [greg@cootsona.net](mailto:greg@cootsona.net)

Chair - Fredericks, Sarah, University of Chicago, [sfredericks@uchicago.edu](mailto:sfredericks@uchicago.edu)

## Scriptural Reasoning Unit

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Call Text:

This Unit gathers Jewish, Christian, and Muslim thinkers for the study of scriptural texts related to themes of contemporary import. Papers should examine brief scriptural passages—drawing on both textual scholarship and reception history—and suggest how they address contemporary readers’ concerns. Participants will be asked to circulate drafts in advance and revise their papers in conversation with each other. At least one session will include text study in small groups.

We invite paper or panel proposals in the following areas:

- Reading and interpreting Scripture during times of upheaval
- The 2017 AAR annual meeting theme of Religion and the Most Vulnerable. This could include engagements with vulnerability and vulnerable persons in and through Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scriptural texts
- Affect and emotion in Scriptural Reasoning
- Hermeneutics
- Scriptural Reasoning methodology
- The nature of Scripture

We welcome proposals on other topics as well and encourage complete panel proposals. For guidance on the sorts of topics and proposals that have worked well in the past, see the sessions from previous years here: <https://jsr.shanti.virginia.edu/the-scriptural-reasoning-group-at-the-am...>

Mission Statement:

“Scriptural reasoning” is a practice of interreligious scriptural study with a twenty year history and a number of associated institutions, doctoral programs, and journals. This Unit provides one “home,” within the AAR itself, for sustained study of the Abrahamic scriptural traditions, for exploring postmodern approaches to the study of scriptural religions, for interreligious and intercultural fellowship as an essential aspect of study, and as an experimental workshop in the practices of collaborative, dialogic, and interdisciplinary study.

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 - Zahl, Simeon, University of Nottingham, [simeon.zahl@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:simeon.zahl@nottingham.ac.uk)

## Secularism and Secularity Unit

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Call Text:

The Secularism and Secularity Unit is interested in co-sponsoring a session with the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit that calls for papers on Max Weber's "Science as a Vocation" to mark its 100th anniversary.

From the "silent exodus" to the "nones" in APA communities, how do Asian American identities and concerns reflect, challenge, and reconfigure conversations around secularization, secularity, and the (post-) secular? (possible co-sponsorship with Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit)

The Secularism and Secularity Unit is once again especially interested in papers that address the secular's complicated relationship with race and sex/gender. What forms of activism does the secular enable that are not available in spaces governed by religious norms, and what forms does it foreclose? How does the divide between secular and religious map (or fail to map) onto struggles for rights and recognition, such as those of indigenous people or activists fighting for racial and gender equality? Why is the secular so often white, so often male?

We encourage paper and session proposals that engage these and related questions through original historical or social scientific research.

Mission Statement:

The Secularism and Secularity Unit explores a broad a 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 Unit 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 - VanAntwerpen, Jonathan, Henry Luce Foundation, New York, NY, [vanantwerpen@hluce.org](mailto:vanantwerpen@hluce.org)

Chair - Blankholm, Joseph, University of California, Santa Barbara, [blankholm@religion.ucsb.edu](mailto:blankholm@religion.ucsb.edu)

## Sikh Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

The Sikh Studies Unit invites papers on any topic related to Sikhism, with any methodological and theoretical approach, but in particular papers that address Sikh (or allied) musics, or, for a possible co-sponsored session with Bioethics and Religion, we welcome papers concerning any aspect of bioethics theory or practical issue from the perspective of Sikhism, or one that is comparative in nature. Papers addressing the conference theme of vulnerability are especially welcomed. We encourage persons interested in presenting with the Unit at the next annual meeting to contact the Chairs ahead of the submission date. We also strongly encourage the submission of papers and panels through this unit in conjunction with other units, to promote the development of co-sponsored sessions and to encourage the inclusion of content on the Sikh tradition across the AAR. Complete paper sessions or roundtable proposals and cosponsored sessions are especially welcome and will be prioritized, and we encourage those with participation from different ranks in the field (from graduate students to faculty) and reflecting diverse perspectives.

### 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 - Singh, Pashaura, University of California, Riverside, [psingh@ucr.edu](mailto:psingh@ucr.edu)

Chair - Hawley, Michael, Mount Royal University, [mhawley@mtroyal.ca](mailto:mhawley@mtroyal.ca)

## Sociology of Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

Sociology of Religion as part of a larger discipline is marked by a canonization of its theory and its division by paradigms and methodologies—whether these be the classics (Weber and Durkheim), the old paradigm (functionalism and social constructionism), or the new paradigm (rational choice) on the one hand or quantitative, qualitative, or historical-comparative sociology on the other. As it intersects with sociology of religion, the study of religion has drawn from theories and methodologies in conversation with sociology, anthropology, critical theory, psychology, history, and other related disciplines. We are interested both in papers that utilize the methods and theories in the study of religion and bring them into the sociological canon as well as those that help religious studies gain a better grasp of the sociological theory of religion. We encourage papers that exploit both the theory and methodology of sociology of religion and religious studies and use them as frames for analysis of concrete cases. We are interested in historical topics in the sociology of religion as well as contemporary ones. In particular, we request papers that touch upon social divisions examining race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, region, age, etc.



Critics of sociology of religion have pointed out that the field is dominated by North American scholars primarily interested in Protestantism. The discipline of religious studies provides a clear antidote to these perceived limitations. Therefore, we encourage contributions from academics who study the various religious traditions around the world as well as those studying North American religious communities. In particular, we would like submissions from scholars from all academic ranks across the lines of nationality, region, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

The purpose of the Sociology of Religion program unit of the American Academy of Religion is to bridge the gap and create cross-fertilization between the Sociology of Religion and Religious Studies. One way to do so is to break down each of these fields into their core component: theory, methods, and data. Comparing sociology of religion and religious studies: First, what are the core canons in each field? Sociological Theory of Religion (SOR) and Method and Theory in the Study of Religion (RS). What are their central theories? Second, what are the main methodologies that each field primarily relies upon? Finally, what count as data in each of these fields?

Along these lines, we are interested in the following topics:

- The intersection of theory, methods and data in Religious Studies and Sociology of Religion
- Bringing non-western theory into Sociological Theory of Religion and the Method and Theory in the Study of Religion
- Core Canons: Sociological Theory of Religion and Method and Theory in the Study of Religion
- Core Theories: Secularization Theory (or Religious Pluralism) and Critical Religion
- Comparative Methodologies: Sociology of Religion vs. Religious Studies
- What counts as data in Religious Studies and Sociology of Religion?
- Assessments of how “religion” is operationalized in quantitative sociology

Beyond this, we are particularly interested in the following more substantive topics. This is not an exclusive list and we encourage submissions on other topics as well.

- Peter Berger’s *The Sacred Canopy* at 50: Future Directions for a Sociological Classic
- Social and Religious Movements (along racial, ethnic, national, regional, or class lines)
- Sociology of Religion from Unheard Voices

In addition to this, the Sociology of Religion Unit is inviting proposal for a co-sponsored panel with the Anthropology of Religion Unit. Below is the description of the panel:

For a special panel co-sponsored with the Anthropology of Religion and Sociology of Religion program units, we invite papers that examine problems encountered or mistakes made in the context of ethnographic fieldwork. Papers should present the context of the research and the specific details of the problem/mistake

that arose and how it was addressed. Extra time will be allotted to brainstorm additional solutions and to thinking broadly about a "methodology of/for mistakes."

The Sociology of Religion Unit 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 has over 8000 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. For further information, please contact SOR co-chairs.

#### 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 - Goldstein, Warren S., Center for Critical Research on Religion, [goldstein@criticaltheoryofreligion.org](mailto:goldstein@criticaltheoryofreligion.org)

Chair - King, Rebekka, Middle Tennessee State University, [rebekka.king@mtsu.edu](mailto:rebekka.king@mtsu.edu)

## Space, Place, and Religion Unit

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#### 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 as it relates to, conditions, and constitutes 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 location 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:

- religious spaces and tourism
- the spatial dimensions of places of religious healing

- transformations of religious spaces to non-religious use or between religious groups
- religious spaces in Latin America and Africa

Proposals on other topics will be considered.

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 - Bains, David, Samford University, [drbains@samford.edu](mailto:drbains@samford.edu)

Chair - Nichols, Brian J., Mount Royal University, [shilong.nichols@gmail.com](mailto:shilong.nichols@gmail.com)

## Student Lounge Roundtable

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Call Text:

The Student Lounge Roundtable Series (SLRS) consists of a series of roundtable conversations/workshops dedicated to professional development and the 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 SLRS is sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee and 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.

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:

- 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
- Creating or managing an online presence (websites, blogging, online portfolios, etc.)
- Job market (applications, interviews, alt-ac, etc.)
- Publishing (open access vs. peer review; alternative forms of publishing, etc.)
- Teaching (activities, online, technology, controversial issues, etc.)
- Presenting research to the public
- Networking
- Grant writing
- CV writing
- Leadership

Please send a brief proposal (~150 words) and a CV to Anthony Roberts at [aroberts@seu.edu](mailto:aroberts@seu.edu) by March 1, 2017 and cc GSC Chair and AAR Student Director, Bhakti Mamtara at [bhaktim@ufl.edu](mailto:bhaktim@ufl.edu). Please indicate if you are willing to co-present if your topic aligns with another proposal. Roundtable time slots are flexible.

Method:

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)

Process:

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

## Study of Islam Unit

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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 a new 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.

If your proposal gets accepted and you agree to be on the program, we expect you to show up to participate at 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 previous annual meeting from the program for the following two years.

We are planning one session in a new format this year, centered on new research in Islamic Studies. This session will be aimed at advanced graduate students, with participants very briefly talking about their work (maximum 5 min) that introduces the audience to their dissertation research. If you are an advanced graduate student and interested in talking succinctly about your research at this session, please submit a paper proposal through the PAPERS system with the abstract and proposal the same text and length (maximum 150 words) and indicate that your submission is for this new session format at the top of the proposal.

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.

For the 2017 meeting in Boston, we are also especially interested in paper and/or panel proposals on:

- surveillance and community (for a potential co-sponsored session with Religion, Media, and Culture)
- experimental pedagogies, especially in relation to an "Introduction to Islam" course, or to a unit within a larger course only partially dealing with Islam
- the histories and experiences of Muslim communities in the Boston area and/or New England region

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, and will be asked in the Fall to provide the full text of their presentation for pre-circulation among session participants, required by November 3, 2017.

#### 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 an enduring interest in pedagogical issues associated with the teaching of Islam.

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 coordinate our work with other Islam-related AAR Program Units, including the Contemporary Islam Unit, the Islam, Gender, Women Unit, the Islamic Mysticism Unit, the Qur'an Unit, and the Material Islam Seminar.

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 - Hammer, Juliane, University of North Carolina, [jhammer@email.unc.edu](mailto:jhammer@email.unc.edu)

Chair - Colby, Frederick, University of Oregon, [fscolby@uoregon.edu](mailto:fscolby@uoregon.edu)

## Study of Judaism Unit

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Call Text:

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. For 2017, we are particularly interested in the following topics:

- Vulnerability (which might include analysis of refugees, immigrants, sexual assault, and others.)
- Jewish communal policies (such as interaction with civil rights, BDS, Israel, Zionism, Black Lives Matter, and others)
- Responses to totalitarianism
- Jews and racialization
- What is Jewish about Jewish thought?
- Visual culture

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 co-sponsorship 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 co-sponsorship 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](mailto:paul_nahme@brown.edu)

Chair - Imhoff, Sarah, Indiana University, [seimhoff@indiana.edu](mailto:seimhoff@indiana.edu)

## Tantric Studies Unit

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Call Text:

The Tantric Studies Unit welcomes pre-formed panel proposals and individual paper proposals. All proposals must be submitted through the AAR PAPERS system and are subject to blind review by members of the Tantric Studies Unit Steering Committee. We particularly encourage the submission of pre-formed paper panels, as these are historically the proposals that are most likely to be added to the program through the Tantric Studies Unit.

In the Unit's business meeting, possible panel themes were proposed by various members of the Unit. They are as follows. Interested parties may contact those listed here below to coordinate plans for panel offerings and presentations. The Unit's co-chairs can assist, as and if needed.

*The Interaction between Haṭhayoga, Rājayoga, and Tantra*

Contact Keith E. Cantú, University of California, Santa Barbara

Email: [kecantu@umail.ucsb.edu](mailto:kecantu@umail.ucsb.edu)

*Tantra and its publics*

Contact Jason Schwarz, University of California, Santa Barbara

Email: [j\\_schwartz@umail.ucsb.edu](mailto:j_schwartz@umail.ucsb.edu)

*Tantra and tribal religions*

Contact Andrea Acri, École pratique des hautes Études, Paris

Email: [andreaacri@mac.com](mailto:andreaacri@mac.com)

*Tantra and literature*

Contact Joel Bordeaux, Colgate University

Email: [jbordeaux@colgate.edu](mailto:jbordeaux@colgate.edu)

*Tantra in Japan* (possibly a review of Bernard Faure's new series on the Gods of Medieval Japan)

Contact Richard Payne, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley

Email: [rkpayne1@mac.com](mailto:rkpayne1@mac.com)

*Jain Tantra*

Contact Ellen Gough, Emory University

Email: [ellen.m.gough@emory.edu](mailto:ellen.m.gough@emory.edu)

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 phenomenon 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 - Nemeč, John, University of Virginia, [nemec@virginia.edu](mailto:nemec@virginia.edu)



## Teaching Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

This Unit critically examines pedagogical theory and practice. Proposals are sought 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. For 2017, paper and panel proposals that address the following themes are especially welcome:

- **Teaching and Current Events.** What strategies do we use to address current events in our classrooms? When is it appropriate to address current events instead of following the syllabus, or is there a way to make space in our syllabi for current events? How do we respond to newsworthy happenings that are outside our disciplines, but which enter the classroom? Successful proposals will address some of these concerns through evidence and practice.
- **Faculty as Public Educators.** How do we engage audiences outside the academy? Who is the audience and where do we find this public? What contributions can scholars of religions make in the public sphere?
- **Teaching the Introductory Course. Learning Outcomes and Pedagogical Strategies –** In introductions to religion(s), what are we introducing and to whom? Should the learning outcomes in introductory courses in the general education/core be different than introductory courses for majors? (This CFP was inspired by conversations following the presentation of the Promoting Religious Literacy College-Wide Seminar in 2016. We invite responses to the Seminar's working document if/when it is available on the AAR's website.)
- **Evidence-Based Teaching in Religion.** Faculty is trained as disciplinary experts, but as educators, we are also called upon to know about how learning works. Successful proposals will discuss course design or demonstrate a teaching tactic grounded in research about teaching and learning. Participants in this session will present a theoretical framework and demonstrate its practical application in teaching religion.
- **Writing the Scholarship on Teaching and Learning.** SoTL addresses the effectiveness of pedagogical practices and philosophies in achieving desired learning outcomes. For this session we invite papers that address one or more of the following questions: What does it mean to reflect critically on one's teaching? How are faculty developing and using the scholarship of teaching and learning in Religious Studies and Theology? What are some innovative ways that faculty are using their classrooms to develop this scholarship? What is the value of this kind of scholarship for individual practice and/or tenure and promotion? What are the ethical challenges in doing this kind of research with students? What kinds of opportunities exist for developing and/or disseminating this kind of research?
- **Open call**

### 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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Bassett, Molly, Georgia State University, [mbassett@gsu.edu](mailto:mbassett@gsu.edu)

Chair - Howell, David B., Ferrum College, [dhowell@ferrum.edu](mailto:dhowell@ferrum.edu)

## Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit

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Call Text:

We seek panel or paper sessions addressing this year's theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," particularly papers that provide perspectives on how Continental philosophers have responded in times of political upheaval. In addition, we welcome proposals that critically interrogate contemporary philosophical commentary on Islam and/or forge constructive alternatives, particularly in conversation with Islamic mysticism; bring Continental and Caribbean thought into dialogue; or reflect on Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* on the centenary of its publication. As always, we invite proposals on other topics of particular interest to the membership.

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. 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 - Kotsko, Adam, Shimer College, [akotsko@gmail.com](mailto:akotsko@gmail.com)

Chair - Marovich, Beatrice, Hanover College, [beatrice.marovich@gmail.com](mailto:beatrice.marovich@gmail.com)

## Theology and Religious Reflection Unit

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Call Text:

- Legacy of Virgilio Elizonda (This will be a pre-arranged panel tri-sponsored with Latino/a Critical and Comparative Studies Unit, and Religion in Latin America and Caribbean Unit.)
- Author Meets Critics panel session on Josef Sorett's, *Spirit in the Dark: A Religious History of Racial Aesthetics* (OUP): specifically seeking submissions from a variety of methodological perspectives (e.g., religion and literature, African American religious history, cultural critique, critical theory, secularism, etc.). (This panel is co-sponsored with the Black Theology Unit.)
- Sacred Time: specifically seeking submissions from a variety of religious traditions.

- The “end of work”: seeking submissions on the intersection of religion, labor, and business.
- Prophecy and Protest: seeking historical and/or comparative analyses; accounts of authorization; identifications and mis-identifications with religious traditions. (N.B.: For this panel we seek panelists willing to make papers available to the AAR community in advance of the session.)
- Religious identity and migration: refugees; sanctuary; what makes a “citizen”?
- Teaching and scholarship in a “post-truth” age: seeking genealogies of “post-truth” reality; defining standards of credibility. (N.B.: We are looking especially for submissions that are pedagogically oriented for this panel.)
- Dystopia/Crisis/Apocalypse: interpreting and responding to the aesthetic, political, economic, and ecological *Zeitgeist*.
- Are discourses of “the human” still useful? (N.B.: This panel will be formatted as a debate and so we are looking for submissions that take a strong stand on one side of this question. Proposals should be succinct.)

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 - Moore, Brenna, Fordham University, [brmoore@fordham.edu](mailto:brmoore@fordham.edu)

Chair - Jones, Tamsin, Trinity College, Hartford, [tamsin.jones@trincoll.edu](mailto:tamsin.jones@trincoll.edu)

## Theology of Martin Luther King Jr. Unit

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Call Text:

The City of Boston played an important role in Dr. King’s theological and moral formation; he studied there and received his Ph.D. degree from Boston University. Mindful of this locationality and in response to the conference theme for the 2017 AAR Annual Meeting, “Religion and the Most Vulnerable,” while also celebrating the 50th anniversary of Dr. King’s historic speech on Vietnam at the Riverside Church in NY, the Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. Unit looks for paper proposals in the following areas:

- King’s “Beyond Vietnam” speech was nationally controversial, and marked a turning point in his life. Written primarily by Vincent Harding, this speech caused many people, including his friends and

supporters to turn against King, and he was assassinated exactly one year after the speech. In light of his “Beyond Vietnam” speech and other writings, what is King’s theology and ethics for “the most vulnerable”? What was the function of his own vulnerability in understanding and advocating for the cause of “the most vulnerable”? What is his distinctiveness compared to other theological and ethical approaches for “the most vulnerable”? What are his lessons and implications for us today in the Trump Era?

- Howard Thurman began serving as the Dean of the Marsh Chapel at Boston University while Dr. King pursued his Ph.D. there. King was known to carry Thurman’s *Jesus and the Disinherited* with him while leading the Montgomery Bus Boycott that propelled him to the national scene. King’s book *Where Do We Go from Here?* is a partial response to some of the conversations that he had with Thurman. How might Thurman’s *Jesus and the Disinherited* and King’s *Where Do We Go from Here?* be put in dialogue with social movements in the 21st century? In light of Thurman and King, what is the importance of the spiritual grounding (or centering) for resilient political resistance and encompassing social transformation today, especially in the context of the Trump Presidency?
- The musical legacy of the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wife Coretta Scott King, and the uses of music in the Civil Rights Movement, fits well with the conference theme. We are also interested in ways that we can connect Coretta Scott King’s graduation from Boston’s New England Conservatory of Music with a Mus.B in voice, and her presence in Boston resulting in her union with Martin Luther King. Coretta King and others (like Bernice Johnson Reagon and the SNCC Singers) used music to fund the Civil Rights Movement (Coretta gave concerts to raise money for the SCLC). Papers or pre-arranged panels will be considered. Co-sponsored by the Music and Religion Unit.
- Other paper proposals that discuss King’s life, theology, and ethics are also welcomed.

#### 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 - Lee, Hak Joon, Fuller Theological Seminary, [hjlee@fuller.edu](mailto:hjlee@fuller.edu)

Chair - Mingo, AnneMarie, Pennsylvania State University, [amingo@psu.edu](mailto:amingo@psu.edu)

## Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit

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Call Text:

- Buddhist approaches to kāvya in Tibet and South Asia, with special interest in apparent gaps or tensions between worldly/courtly aspects of kāvya and Buddhist values and practices of renunciation (potential co-sponsorship with Religion in South Asia and/or Buddhism), suggested by Nancy Lin ([nancy.g.lin@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.g.lin@gmail.com))
- LGBT or queer sexualities and subjectivities in Buddhist traditions, for possible co-sponsorship with Queer Studies and Religion, Religion and Sexuality, or Buddhism, suggested by Julie Regan ([reganj@lasalle.edu](mailto:reganj@lasalle.edu))
- Material religion, Natasha Mikles ([nlm3b@virginia.edu](mailto:nlm3b@virginia.edu))
- Comparative studies in religion titled “Rethinking Magic”, Eric Mortensen ([ericdmort@yahoo.com](mailto:ericdmort@yahoo.com))
- Religious efficacy and resistance to state projects, Annabella Pitkin ([apitkin@lehigh.edu](mailto:apitkin@lehigh.edu))
- Voices from Larung Gar, Holly Gayley ([gayley@colorado.edu](mailto:gayley@colorado.edu))
- Religion & ecology, Aaron Weiss ([aweiss@ciis.edu](mailto:aweiss@ciis.edu))
- Spirit possession in the Himalayas, Katarina Turpeinen ([katarina.turpeinen@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:katarina.turpeinen@vanderbilt.edu)) and Christopher Bell ([cbell@stetson.edu](mailto:cbell@stetson.edu))
- Tibetan masculinity, Tibetan femininity, Natasha Mikles ([nlm3b@virginia.edu](mailto:nlm3b@virginia.edu)) and Jue Liang ([jl4nf@virginia.edu](mailto:jl4nf@virginia.edu)). They note that proposals from all religious traditions in Tibet are welcome.
- Art, ritual, and embodiment, for possible co-sponsorship with Buddhism or Body and Religion units, Rae Dachille ([raedachille@email.arizona.edu](mailto:raedachille@email.arizona.edu))
- Sectarian boundaries in Tibetan Buddhism, Manuel Lopez ([mlopezzafra@ncf.edu](mailto:mlopezzafra@ncf.edu)) and Dominic Sur ([dominic.sur@usu.edu](mailto:dominic.sur@usu.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 - Jacoby, Sarah, Northwestern University, [s-jacoby@northwestern.edu](mailto:s-jacoby@northwestern.edu)

Chair - Bogin, Benjamin, Skidmore College, [bbogin@skidmore.edu](mailto:bbogin@skidmore.edu)

## Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Unit

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Call Text:

Co-Sponsored Session with the Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit (2.5 hours): In Gathering Clouds: Theological Responses to Fascism inspired by Bonhoeffer and Tillich

In this joint session between the Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis and Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Units invite papers which explore religious responses to fascism inspired by the thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich. The papers may explore: 1) the discrete ways these theologians grappled with the issue in their own context(s); 2) theological postures or practices which they offer that may be used in the contemporary context; 3) the use of philosophical, cultural, and/or political criticism to illuminate their theological resistance to fascism; or 4) theological theories of resistance shaped by the particular systems articulated by Bonhoeffer and/or Tillich. While this joint session is envisioned as a papers session proposals for prearranged panels will be considered.

Co-Sponsored Session with the Open and Relational Theologies Unit (2.5 hours): Does God Need the World? Tillich and Whitehead in Conversation

In this time of looming climate catastrophe a major impediment to action has been the theological conviction of many that God will not let us destroy our world. Embedded in this idea is that we are indispensable to God. What if that is not the case? This joint session between the Tillich: Issues in Theology and Culture and Open Theologies Units will explore the fundamental question: "Does God need the world?" We are seeking papers for a panel which explore topics such as: 1) The metaphysics of the divine, 2) cosmology, 3) the place humanity in the life of the Divine, and 4) related issues. Paper proposals addressing this question by

engagement with the work of Paul Tillich and/or Alfred North Whitehead are welcome. Robert Neville will respond.

#### Book Panel (90 minutes)

This session will be a prearranged book review panel on *Tillich and the Abyss: Foundations, Feminism and Theology of Praxis* by Sigrid Gudmarsdottir. The panel will include responses by Catherine Keller and John Thatamanil.

#### Mission Statement:

This Unit fosters scholarship and scholarly exchanges that 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 also appearing elsewhere.

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

#### Method of submission:

PAPERS

#### Leadership:

Chair - Ray, Stephen G., Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, [stephen.ray@garrett.edu](mailto:stephen.ray@garrett.edu)

Chair - Stahl, Devan, Michigan State University, [devanstahl@gmail.com](mailto:devanstahl@gmail.com)

## Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit

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#### Call Text:

The Impact of Digital Humanities on the Study of Non-Canonical Texts

One or two Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity (AAR) sessions in 2017 will be co-sponsored with the SBL Digital Humanities and Pseudepigrapha program units. All papers for these sessions should explore the influence of the Digital Humanities in general, and the ongoing digitization of manuscripts in particular, on the study of non-canonical texts. These texts must fall into the broad category of "pseudepigrapha," or stem from or have been influential in Eastern Late Antiquity, but need not fall into both categories. The session will provide opportunities for comparison between Digital Humanities projects in these subject areas even if individual papers focus on one or the other. Important questions to explore under this heading may include: What new opportunities does digitization provide for the study of non-canonical texts/texts from Eastern Late Antiquity? Does digitization and online availability confirm or challenge canonical divides and academic assessment schemes? Are canonical texts privileged or treated differently than non-canonical texts? Are earlier Western texts prioritized over Eastern Late Antique texts? How does digitization affect the imaginations of literary categories?

The Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity program unit also welcomes submissions on any topic related to our subject area, for a second (or third) session.

#### 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 - McGrath, James, Butler University, [jfmcgrat@butler.edu](mailto:jfmcgrat@butler.edu)

Chair - Koltun-Fromm, Naomi, Haverford College, [nkoltunf@haverford.edu](mailto:nkoltunf@haverford.edu)

## Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit

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Call Text:

The Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy 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. We seek to explore, cultivate, and celebrate strategies for integrating teaching, activism, and research across religious traditions and scholarly disciplines. This includes learning and research in conversation with activist communities, thus allowing our understanding of religious traditions, culture, and knowledge itself to be challenged and shaped by such engagement.

For the 2017 AAR meeting, we invite proposals for two sessions:

- In partnership with the Practical Theology unit, which engages practical theology and religious practice, reflects critically on religious traditions and practices, and explores issues in particular subdisciplines of practical theology and ministry, we would like to explore President Eddie Glaude's 2017 presidential theme, "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," by taking up the topic of theological education broadly understood among or with the most vulnerable, on the margins, in the streets, prisons, or other spaces of marginality. To this end, this co-sponsored session invites proposals for individual presentations on the following topics: experiential or transformative pedagogies or theological education among or with the most vulnerable, outside of the classroom and in spaces of marginality, among first generation students, and/or generated within/among/by communities and scholars in 2/3rds world. Alternative approaches to the production of knowledge arising out of spaces of marginality that challenge boundaries among scholarship, service, and activism are welcome! Fr. Daniel Franklin Pilario of St. Vincent's School of Theology in Quezon City, Philippines will be a respondent to this session.



- For a co-sponsored session with the Religion, Holocaust and Genocide unit, a panel titled, "Teaching Holocaust and Genocide in This Time," to address issues of pedagogy and current world politics.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Ray, Darby, Bates College, [dray3@bates.edu](mailto:dray3@bates.edu)

## Vatican II and Contemporary Christianity Unit

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Call Text:

The Contributions of John O'Malley, SJ, to the Critical Study of Vatican II

For the 2017 annual convention, the Vatican II and Contemporary Christianity Unit seeks to promote critical studies of the Second Vatican Council, its reception, and continuing influence on contemporary Christianity. The works of John W. O'Malley, Jesuit historian of Georgetown University, have greatly contributed, thanks also but not only to his internationally acclaimed book *What Happened at Vatican II* (2008) to the critical understanding of conciliar events. His recent book on Trent (2013) and his book on Vatican II represent a major shift in the understanding of the modern conciliar tradition. His forthcoming book on Vatican I promises to give us a new view of the conciliar tradition between Trent and Vatican II.

Contributions are invited on these and other aspects of O'Malley's contributions:

- The Second Vatican Council in the light of the history of early modern Catholicism and the relationship with the council of Trent.
- The significance of O'Malley's insight into the rhetorical turn of Vatican II and the style of the Church for the interpretation of the documents of Vatican II.
- Reading the various historical sources to arrive at a fuller understanding of the conciliar event (Acta, diaries of the council fathers, journalistic accounts, etc.).
- The teaching of conciliar history to new generations of students of Christian history and theology.
- The continuing significance of the council's rhetorical turn for the proclamation of the Christian message in contemporary culture.
- O'Malley and the tradition of conciliar studies in North America.
- O'Malley's influence on rethinking the "periodization" of conciliar history.

Mission Statement:

From 2012 to 2016, this Unit will pay 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 wide-ranging implications for other faiths, other Christian churches, and for the wider world alike. This Unit has a double focus. On one hand, we focus on 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, the history of the reception of the Council, and the redaction history of the different documents of the Council. On the other hand, we have a strong theological focus and will pay attention both to hermeneutical issues connected to methods of interpreting conciliar teaching and to the interpretation of the most important documents of Vatican II in the year of their anniversary, starting with the liturgical constitution (1963–2013). By looking more closely at the past, our Unit hopes to promote conciliarity and synodality in the Christian churches in the present.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Faggioli, Massimo, Villanova University, [massimo.faggioli@gmail.com](mailto:massimo.faggioli@gmail.com)

Chair - Clifford, Catherine E., Saint Paul University, [cclifford@ustpaul.ca](mailto:cclifford@ustpaul.ca)

## Wesleyan Studies Unit

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Call Text:

We are calling for papers in the first session proposed below and we plan to invite a panel for the second session proposed:

- Methodism and Nationalism. The year 2017 marks the centennial of the United States' entry into World War I. The response of Methodists in the USA to the "Great War" was contested. While the Methodist Episcopal Church established a national war council in Washington, pastors who sought to cool down the patriotic fervor found their churches painted yellow. We call for papers examining the intersections of Methodism and nationalism. As examples, papers might explore the Wesley's views on patriotism, views on war and Christian pacifism in the Methodist family, and the relationship between Wesleyan/Methodist identities and national narratives in the United States or other parts of the world.
- Wesleyan Ecclesiologies. In response to a draft document on ecclesiology entitled, "Wonder, Hope, and Love" offered by the Faith and Order Commission of The United Methodist Church and commended for study by the denomination's 2016 General Conference, we will invite panelists from a variety of church backgrounds to respond to this theological statement in the light of the Word Council of Churches Faith and Order Statement, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (2014), which is referred to in the UM document. [NB: This will be an invited panel, and we are not calling for paper proposals in this area.]

Mission Statement:

This Unit seeks to promote the critical understanding and appropriation of Wesleyan 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 - Campbell, Ted A., Southern Methodist University, [tedc@smu.edu](mailto:tedc@smu.edu)

Chair - Colon-Emeric, Edgardo, Duke University, [ecolonemeric@div.duke.edu](mailto:ecolonemeric@div.duke.edu)

## Western Esotericism Unit

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Call Text:

The Pagan-Esoteric Complex: Mapping Intersecting Milieus. Cosponsored with the Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit

Despite the considerable overlaps that exist between contemporary paganism and Western esotericism, there have been no conscious efforts to bring scholars in these two fields together around intersecting research interests. To amend this situation, the Western Esotericism Unit and the Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit invite papers that deal with the following three intersections:

- Intersecting milieus of practitioners (e.g., shared spaces and material cultures, shared practices, overlapping group memberships).
- Intersecting identity discourses (e.g., the formation of identities around tropes such as “magic vs. religion”, “pagan vs. Christian”, or “tradition vs. modern”).
- Intersecting histories and genealogies (e.g., the roots of esotericism in the mnemohistory of paganism, and the roots of contemporary pagan practice in 19th century esotericism).

We are particularly interested in papers that focus on mapping contemporary milieus, but historical and conceptual papers are also welcome.

Ritual Creativity: Old and New, Inside and Out

The panel explores the development of new ritual practices in ancient, medieval, and contemporary esoteric sources. Specifically it attends to the processes by which practitioners construct new rituals, the discourses they draw upon from inside their own faith traditions and from outside them, as well as from other, non-sacred discourses and practices. At the same time the panel will also explore the means of theorizing new ritual expressions, with emic views from inside practitioners' traditions, and etic views by theorists of religion.

Differently Gendered Esotericisms: this World and the Next

Esoteric thought has often embraced both extreme and non-normative ideas of sex and gender. In the late-antique *Asclepius*, Hermes Trismegistus asserts that God has two sexes (i.e., is bigendered), an idea with cosmic implications that gets re-appropriated later in different ways. In the 19th century, Madame Blavatsky identified male and female principles in the world, suggesting the Holy Spirit embodied a female principle, while angels were dual gendered, like God and the first Adam. On the other hand her contemporary Ida Craddock professed to be the actual divine bride of an angel. What does this imply for angelic gender? This

session will explore issues of cosmic sex and gender in esoteric thought, as well as how these ideas are impacted and engaged on the ground by contemporary communities including LGBT practitioners.

#### Black Magic and Dark Spirituality from Ancient to Postmodern

This session will open up discussion of darker more transgressive forms of spirituality. It is intended to include examinations of dark rituals in traditional institutional contexts (e.g., rites against witches, curses or exorcisms done by professionals), and counter institutional rituals and theologies (for example, rituals that invert institutional norms in ancient Gnosticism, necromancy, and medieval ritual magic). In modernity, we hope to discuss the embrace of differently defined ideas of evil in the works of Aleister Crowley, contemporary Satanisms, and Left-Hand Path movements. Some questions to be entertained: What functions does darkness serve in esotericism and religion more broadly? How do antinomian practices relate to ethics in different contexts? What do ancient and modern dark spiritualities have in common?

#### 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, University of California, Santa Barbara, [easprem@religion.ucsb.edu](mailto:easprem@religion.ucsb.edu)

## Wildcard Session

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#### 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:

- All Wildcard sessions are ninety-minutes in length and will be scheduled for Sunday afternoon at the Annual Meeting.

- 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, 2017.

Method:

PAPERS

Process:

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

## Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit

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Call Text:

Session One: Womanist Ways of Advocacy: Public Policy and Re-Envisioning the Black Social Gospel

This session will review the perspectives and practices of Black women to address public policy issues. We especially seek papers that place emphasis on the following: 1) The advocacy work of Black women politicians, 2) Black women's use of the arts as platforms for political resistance and liberation, and 3) Black women's efforts to reshape the social gospel for this 21st century.

Session Two: Wholistic Self-care: Mining the Depths, Challenges, and Stigmas of Communal and Private Mental Health from Womanist Perspectives.

While progress is being made with how people view mental health, this session will explore consistent challenges and stigmas for Black people: 1) the challenges of gaining access to affirming and competent mental health care for Black women (heterosexual and LGBTQ), 2) the stigmas associated with mental health disabilities within academia, and 3) How faith shapes coping strategies and attitudes about mental health within Black communities.

Possible Joint Session

Papers for a possible joint session with the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit, Liberation Theologies Unit, and the Religion and Disability Studies Unit on the various ways in which bodies are used to communicate, interpret, and theologize --to tell stories drawn from signing the body-- in African American and other cultures, including the use of Black American Sign Language, a distinct variant of ASL that arose from the experiences of Black Deaf people in segregated schools for the deaf.

Author-Meets-Critics panel for Nikki Young's recent book *Black Queer Ethics, Family, and Philosophical Imagination* (Palgrave, 2016) (<http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137584984>).

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

Leadership:

Chair - Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A., Shaw University, [cduggan@shawu.edu](mailto:cduggan@shawu.edu)

Chair - Fry Brown, Teresa L., Emory University, [rev\\_drt@bellsouth.net](mailto:rev_drt@bellsouth.net)

## Women and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

The Women and Religion Unit invites individual papers and panel proposals from a variety of religious and cultural traditions exploring women's experiences in local and transnational contexts. We encourage the use of alternate presentation formats.

We are particularly interested in proposals related to one of the following themes:

- gender violence; and/or the intersection of gender, racial and/or other forms of violence in the context of Black Lives Matter and other movements
- In keeping with the 2017 AAR Presidential Theme on "Religion and the Most Vulnerable," revisiting feminist/womanist theological approaches to anger (particularly the work of Bev Harrison and Audre Lorde)
- Alternative understandings of women's religious leadership (transnational, transcultural, etc)  
Religion and women's activism in and around Boston, MA
- Women/gender, religion, and transnationalism
- The work of Nancy Fraser on feminism, capitalism, and dissent
- Revisiting the 1993 "Reimagining" conference in light of its upcoming 25th anniversary in 2018
- For a possible cosponsored session with the Mysticism Unit: we are interested in papers on the broad topic of "Mysticism and the Feminine." Such papers could include analyses of the regulation and resistance of female and female-identified mystics, the feminization of certain mystical states, the category of the symbolic feminine in mystical approaches, female divinity, and/or mysticism and the "monstrous feminine."

- For a possible cosponsored session with the Religion and Europe Unit: comparative approaches to Muslim headscarves in different European countries or between Europe and North America, including--but not limited to--how these approaches raise questions about policing women's bodies and attire by religion and the secular state.

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 Units and Seminars 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 - Whitehead, Deborah, University of Colorado, [deborah.whitehead@colorado.edu](mailto:deborah.whitehead@colorado.edu)

Chair - Pae, K. Christine, Denison University, [paec@denison.edu](mailto:paec@denison.edu)

## Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit

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Call Text:

As women of color scholars and activists we are interested in proposals concerned with the everyday lives of women of color, especially in light of the Trump presidency. We are seeking proposals on: women of Color and the Women's March on Washington (2017); the Anniversary of Roe v. Wade - women of color and reproductive justice; women of Color and Islamophobia; women of color graduate student activism and strategic alliances between women of color; and women of color feminisms

The Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit, the Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit, and the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit are co-sponsoring a panel on the work of Mary Daly, and its relevance to feminist critiques of religion in the 21st century. This coincides with the publication of *The Mary Daly Reader* (ed. Jennifer Rycenga and Linda Barufaldi; NYU Press); the co-editors will be present as respondents. Possible themes include Daly's significance given the resurgence of explicit sexism, racism, and nationalism in world politics; how and why debates concerning Daly's thought on issues of race, transgender identity, and separatism, can now be assessed historically; responses of young feminists and womanists to rediscovering Daly's work; Daly's transformative yet simultaneously tempestuous impact on the field of women and religion; lesbian identity as an ideological more than embodied position in the 21st century, and the relevance of Daly's legacy for new challenges of androcentricism that take into account a wider "animal-human" framework. Both paper proposals and nominations for a panel presentation will be considered.

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

Method of submission:  
PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Kim, Grace Ji-Sun, Earlham College, [gjskim@hotmail.com](mailto:gjskim@hotmail.com)

Chair - Marshall Turman, Eboni, Yale University, [eboni.marshall-turman@yale.edu](mailto:eboni.marshall-turman@yale.edu)

## World Christianity Unit

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Call Text:

The World Christianity Unit invites proposals on the following topics:

Proposals that critically examine the long term global legacies and implications emerging from the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation (1517-2017) for World Christianity, especially from interdisciplinary perspectives and with a particular attention to any of the following:

- developments that explore the expansive and global implications of “reformation” within diverse historic and contemporary contexts, social locations, and modes of expression in World Christianity;
- twentieth and twenty first century reformations that have shifted Christianity’s axis from Europe and North America to Africa, Latin and Central America, as well as Asia and Oceania, while transforming beliefs, practices, and communities worldwide; or
- reform movements, whether successful or unsuccessful, that have emerged through or been impeded by interactions among Christians, or between Christians and other religious, political, social, cultural, etc. groups.

Proposals that seek to identify and critically examine emerging trajectories and/or interdisciplinary innovations in the study of World Christianity. While near colloquialisms now exist that describe recent shifts in location (the centre of gravity has shifted South) and demographic identification (a largely non-Western religion), what does current empirical research project for the future and how are methods (old and new) being used to break new ground? Possible topics include:

- emerging demographical and conceptual patterns that help us better understand trajectories in World Christianity;
- cutting edge use of interdisciplinary methods and theories that break new ground either on the local or global level; or



- a reassessment of the analytical toolbox typically used in studies of World Christianity, including terminology, types of evidence, epochal demarcations, borders of any type, etc.

Proposals that critically examine the trailblazing contributions of Robert Schreiter and/or Stephen Bevans and their implications for further development in theology (in a co-sponsored session with the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit). Papers can focus on particular facets of their work, individually or together, such as: on a topic pertaining to the nature, methods, and theoretical resources of contextual theology; on the implications of their work for the advancement of missiology, ecumenism, and interreligious relations; on particular theological issues treated in their works, for example, reconciliation and peace building, or pneumatology; or concentrate on issues in constructing a local theology in a particular context in light of their work.

**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 until after final acceptance/rejection

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

As a rule, we use anonymous submissions via PAPERS and adhere to this conscientiously. Exceptions include special sessions, e.g. author-meets-critics sessions and some co-sponsored panels.

**Leadership:**

Chair - Williams, Corey, Leiden University, [c.l.williams@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:c.l.williams@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Chair - Tan, Jonathan, Case Western Reserve University, [jonathan@jonathantan.org](mailto:jonathan@jonathantan.org)

## Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit

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**Call Text:**

This Unit seeks individual paper, papers session, or roundtable proposals on the topic of yoga in theory and practice from a variety of perspectives, including sociology, anthropology, history of religions, philosophy and theology, and cultural studies. We prefer complete session submissions rather than individual paper proposals whenever possible. You are encouraged to contact the individuals listed next to each suggested topic for more information about that topic or to contact the Co-Chairs to suggest other topics.

Suggested topics include:

- Book Panel on Roots of Yoga, by James Mallinson and Mark Singleton (Sravana Borkataky-Varma, [sb23@rice.edu](mailto:sb23@rice.edu))
- Yoga and Sacred Texts (Sussane Scholtz, [sscholz@smu.edu](mailto:sscholz@smu.edu), and Christopher Miller, [chpmiller@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chpmiller@ucdavis.edu))
- Yoga Church: Yoga Communities with Religious Dimensions (Kenneth Rose, [krose@cnu.edu](mailto:krose@cnu.edu), and Christa Schwind, [christaschwind@gmail.com](mailto:christaschwind@gmail.com))

- Mapping Body and Mind in Yoga (Kenneth Rose, [krose@cnu.edu](mailto:krose@cnu.edu), Christopher Chapple, [cchapple@lmu.edu](mailto:cchapple@lmu.edu), and Hugh Urban, [urban.41@osu.edu](mailto:urban.41@osu.edu))
- Comparing Mindfulness and Yoga (Andrea Jain, [andrjain@iupui.edu](mailto:andrjain@iupui.edu), and Stephanie Corigliano, [stephanie.corigliano@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.corigliano@gmail.com))

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Jain, Andrea, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, [andrjain@iupui.edu](mailto:andrjain@iupui.edu)

Chair - Borkatky-Varma, Sravana, Rice University, [sb23@rice.edu](mailto:sb23@rice.edu)

## Yogācāra Studies Unit

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Call Text:

At this year's Business Meeting, a number of proposals were put forward. We welcome submissions for these panels as well as suggestions for other topics and panels.

We have one session and can co-chair another. We generally devote our dedicated session to discussion of a particular text. Suggestions for next year's text included:

- Selected passages from the *Vimśatikā* and Its Commentaries (verses 7-20). Anyone interested in participating in this panel should contact Roy Tzohar: [roytzohar@gmail.com](mailto:roytzohar@gmail.com).
- *Pramāṇa-viniścaya*
- *Santanāntara-siddhi*

We also hope to co-chair a panel with another unit. Suggestions for such panels include:

- Yogācāra and Meditation (suggested by Karin Meyers: [Karin.Meyers@ryi.org](mailto:Karin.Meyers@ryi.org))
- Yogācāra in Context
- Yogācāra and Philosophy of Language
- Yogācāra and Philosophy of Mind

Other topics are welcomed.

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

Leadership:

Chair - Tzohar, Roy, Tel-Aviv University, [roytzo@post.tau.ac.il](mailto:roytzo@post.tau.ac.il)

Chair - Powers, C. John, Australian National University, [john.powers@anu.edu.au](mailto:john.powers@anu.edu.au)

## Chinese Christianities Seminar

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Call Text:

Developing the overarching theme of “Chinese Christianities” and building on the success of our first two years, this third year of the seminar will focus on various religious boundaries. We welcome papers in the following or related areas:

- Historical, social scientific, and/or theological approaches to understanding Chinese Christianities as a Chinese religion
- Lived experiences of Chinese Christianities and the embrace/rejection of other religions and philosophies (e.g., Confucianism, Buddhism, folk religion, civil religion) and/or their adherents
- Theoretical opportunities and challenges in the construction of Chinese Christian theology with Chinese religious and philosophical resources
- Explorations/critiques into the usefulness of certain theoretical engagements between Chinese Christianities and Chinese religions (e.g., multiple religious belonging, comparative theology, cross-textual hermeneutics, postcolonial criticism, etc.)

Mission Statement:

This seminar provides a collaborative forum for scholars of different disciplines to engage in an academic discourse about 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 diasporic Chinese. “Chinese” is an expansive term, including mainland China proper as well as a large, linguistically, and culturally diverse diaspora, and encompassing more than a fifth of the world’s population; the Han Chinese people are sometimes described as the world’s largest ethnic group. 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.). Chinese Christianities both transcend and hinder a number of regional, social, religious, etc. boundaries. Over the course of these five years, this seminar will offer a unique opportunity for scholars to engage and to debate the implications of the multiplicity of Chinese Christianities with regards to the boundaries they engage.

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)

## Economics and Capitalism in the Study of Buddhism Seminar

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Call Text:

Collapse of Empires: institutional changes created by larger social, political, and economic changes; this includes historical and contemporary instances, such as the collapse of the Pala Empire, and that of the Tibetan Empire, and more recent instances, such as the dissolution of direct colonialist domination and soviet control of economies; topics therefore also encompass neo-colonialism and post-colonialism. The Seminar actively encourages contributions that extend the horizon of discussion beyond the contemporary, that is, it seeks to include examples from any historical period, not just modern and post-modern. Also, while the Seminar seeks to support a sustained conversation of the different topics falling within its general theme, proposals are welcome from anyone—whether they have participated in the seminar in the past or not.

Mission Statement:

The seminar will allow an extended and focused examination of the historical background of Buddhism in networks of exchange, under colonialism—the previous global socio-economic system—and the present-day effects of global, or late, capitalism with its ability to transcend traditional national boundaries. In the same way that previous eras saw transcontinental and transoceanic patterns of trade as agencies in the transmission and transformation of Buddhism, there is an integral connection between the ability of contemporary consumer capitalism to make a presence in societies over the entirety of the globe and the technological changes that have contributed to increasingly globalized systems of communication and travel. There are two major areas of inquiry that the seminar explores. The first is the economic formation of Buddhism as an institution, such as the ways that Buddhism is represented, commodified, and marketed in capitalist society. The second area of inquiry is the ways that economic relations and capitalism have influenced the conception of Buddhism as an object of academic study.

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

Method of submission:  
PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Payne, Richard K., Graduate Theological Union, [rkpayne1@mac.com](mailto:rkpayne1@mac.com)

Chair - Rambelli, Fabio, University of California, Santa Barbara, [rambelli@eastasian.ucsb.edu](mailto:rambelli@eastasian.ucsb.edu)

## Emerging Church, Millennials, and Religion Seminar

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Call Text:

The Emerging Church, Millennials and Religion Research Seminar seeks papers investigating the particularities vis-a-vis ECM and/or Millennials. As such, for the 2017 meeting we seek papers focusing on political and economic engagements as well as regional/international particularities within Millennial religious expression.

Politics, Economics, and/of the Emerging Church: We seek papers that deal with the way politics and economics are factors both within and without the Emerging Church. We wish to understand the ways that different political and/or economic factors, such as race, gender, and class, function as part of the critique and appeal of the Emerging Church, as well as how the Emerging Church itself is positioned and positions itself in terms of race, gender, and class - each of which may be raised individually and/or at their intersection.

Regional/National/International Snapshots of the Millennials and their Non-/Religious Expressions: We seek papers that examine the differences between Millennials and the various religious and non-religious movements they participate in, in different regions of the U.S. or other countries. Papers may focus on an exploration of Millennial religious expressions like festivals, the Emerging Church movement(s), alternative congregation(s) directed at millennials, in a particular region/country or engage in comparison between different regions/countries.

All papers should be substantive works (5000-7000 words) that will be distributed ahead of time to attendees through the AAR full papers web page. Papers from this session may be included in a future edited volume.

Mission Statement:

The Emergent/ing Church has gained tremendous notoriety in both the popular media and among religious people and scholars. This Research Seminar seeks to begin an interdisciplinary discussion about the Emergent/ing Church in light of other cultural and religious shifts like the rise of the "nones" and the shift in religiosity among the millennial generation. To this end we wish to investigate the Emergent/ing Church by bringing together Philosophy of Religion, Practical and Feminist Theology, American Religious History and Sociology of Religion approaches. We seek to explore how this movement is affecting the religious landscape and its potential to change Evangelicalism, the larger movement of Christianity, and the Western European and North American religious environs in general. We anticipate the production of an edited volume from the papers produced as a result of this seminar which will provide a critical analysis of the movement from a Religious Studies perspective.

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

Method of submission:  
PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Reed, Randy, Appalachian State University, [reedrw@appstate.edu](mailto:reedrw@appstate.edu)

Chair - Zbaraschuk, Michael, Pacific Lutheran University, [zbarasgm@plu.edu](mailto:zbarasgm@plu.edu)

## Folklore and Religion Seminar

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Call Text:

In addition to paper proposals which apply the perspectives and methodologies of Folkloristics as a discipline to the study of religion, this year the Folklore and Religion Seminar particularly welcomes paper submissions focused on two broad themes:

### Material Culture and Vernacular Religion

Material culture has long been an interest and preoccupation of Folklore as a discipline, and religious cultures and communities offer a particularly rich vein of material objects, practices, and behaviors that serve to make the sacred visible, tangible, and sensible. Material Religion is a point of unique and dynamic intersection where Folklore and Religious Studies come together in fruitful conversation. We welcome submissions that explore the material dimensions of everyday religious practice, including (but not limited to) religious foodways, home altars, icons and images, folk art with religious themes, and the like.

### All Hallows, All Souls, All Saints: Vernacular Practices for the Living and the Dead

Vernacular traditions surrounding the seasonal festivals of Hallowe'en, All Souls' Day, and All Saints' Day, as well as festal phenomena like Haitian *Fet Gede*, Mexican/Mexican-American *Día de los Muertos*, Japanese *Obon*, etc., offer rich opportunities to explore the ways in which individuals, families, and communities deal with the quotidian reality of death. The Folklore and Religion Seminar welcomes paper proposals that apply Folkloristic methods and perspectives to the study of these various festivals of the Dead – these seasons of endings and liminality - in historical and ethnographic perspective. We also welcome submissions which focus on traditional folklore forms, examples, or genres of expression (narrative, ritual, material culture, performance, foodways) associated with the interplay between the worlds of the living and the dead.

The ultimate direction taken by the Folklore and Religion Seminar at the 2017 Annual Meeting will depend upon the number and quality of submissions in each category. Submissions that mediate or unify these themes are welcomed as well.

Mission Statement:

Folklore Studies has led and leads the way in directing scholarship on the expressive culture of religious communities, the methodological challenges of ethnographic work within those communities, and research and analysis of the religion of ordinary people diachronically and synchronically. Uniquely representing the theoretical and methodological perspectives of folkloristics on the study of religion, as well as consistently spotlighting the contextual material that folklorists see as significant evidence of religious belief and practice, this AAR Seminar allows a more permanent place at the Annual Meeting for the study of religion as associated with such topics as food, costume, vernacular art, architecture, material culture, medical and healing beliefs, narrative and song, performance, etc., as well as topics relevant to applied folkloristics such as the “paranormal” and the “supernatural.”

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Primiano, Leonard Norman, Cabrini College, [primiano@cabrini.edu](mailto:primiano@cabrini.edu)

Chair - Wehmeyer, Stephen, Champlain College, [swehmeyer@champlain.edu](mailto:swehmeyer@champlain.edu)

## Global-Critical Philosophy of Religion Seminar

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Call Text:

We invite papers that re-imagine philosophy of religion in a globally inclusive or critically engaged manner. Specifically, we are looking for papers that discuss different ways of understanding the self in religious and/or philosophical perspectives. What is the nature of the self? What are the criteria for selfhood? When and from where does the self emerge? What are the trajectories or paths of the self? What are obstacles along the way of the journey or of self-discovery (Selbstfindung, 自己発見)?

Mission Statement:

Recent years have witnessed the publication of several new proposals for a philosophy of religion that is religiously inclusive and critically informed. But there is to date no such textbook for philosophy of religion—no textbook that thoroughly integrates non-theistic religious philosophies and critically engages the methodological and theoretical issues of religious studies. This seminar intends to research and write such a textbook. Our seminar is constituted by area-specialist scholars of religion, comparativist philosophers of religion, critical theorists of religion, and traditional (analytic) philosophers of religion. These constituencies will work together over the next five years (2015-2019) to identify the comparative categories and critical terms for global-critical philosophy of religion, to populate these categories with the arguments and ideas of a diversity of religious traditions, to take up critical issues pertaining to cross-cultural comparison and philosophy of these arguments and ideas, and to develop the blueprint and content for an innovative new undergraduate textbook in global-critical philosophy of religion. We will also seek to publish independently the essays that are contributed to each working session of the seminar.

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 - Kopf, Gereon, Luther College, [kopfg@luther.edu](mailto:kopfg@luther.edu)

Chair - Knepper, Timothy D., Drake University, [tim.knepper@drake.edu](mailto:tim.knepper@drake.edu)

## Holmes Welch and the Study of Buddhism in Twentieth-Century China Seminar

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Call Text:

THIS SEMINAR IS NOT ACCEPTING PAPER PROPOSALS FOR 2017

2017 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Welch's seminal work *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900-1950*, which was followed in 1968 by *The Buddhist Revival in China*. Together these works remain foundational for the field of Buddhist studies. Over the past three years, this seminar has served as both a venue for the work of a number of up and coming scholars of modern Chinese Buddhism, and as an opportunity to reflect on the continuing influence of Welch's ideas on our field. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of *Practice*, the Seminar will expand this conversation by holding a pre-arranged roundtable discussion with scholars of Buddhist studies that do not specialize in Chinese Buddhism to reflect on the impact that Welch's writings have had on their own scholarly lives.

**Mission Statement:**

This seminar will celebrate the significant scholarly contributions made by Holmes Welch (1924-1981) to the study of twentieth-century Chinese Buddhism, and also explore how we might advance the field beyond the boundaries and scope of his original ideas through the use of new sources and methodologies. Revisiting and expanding Welch's scholarship is urgently needed, since his work continues to function as both a standard resource for specialists and as an authoritative summary of Chinese Buddhism during this era for non-specialists. The final goal of this seminar is to produce a critical collected volume covering the major aspects of Welch's work, in which contributors will update his findings and approaches with their own cutting-edge scholarship. The publication of this volume will roughly coincide with the upcoming fiftieth anniversaries of the publications of Welch's volumes *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism* and *The Buddhist Revival*.

**Call for Papers:**

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

**Method of Submission:**

Other:

As this year will be a roundtable organized by the Seminar Chairs, there is no need for proposals.

**Leadership:**

Chair - Erik Hammerstrom, Pacific Lutheran University, [hammerej@plu.edu](mailto:hammerej@plu.edu)

Chair - Gregory Adam Scott, University of Edinburgh, [gregory.scott@ed.ac.uk](mailto:gregory.scott@ed.ac.uk)

## Interreligious Reflections on Immigration Seminar

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**Call Text:**

The Interreligious Reflections on Immigration Seminar invites proposals for papers that address religion and immigration, broadly conceived, that engage two or more religious traditions. This is the fourth year of the Seminar whose goal is to produce a follow-up volume to *Strangers in This World: Multi-Religious Reflections* (Fortress Press, 2015). Scholars interested in contributing to the new volume of essays are encouraged to submit a proposal/abstract that addresses immigration and religion from any scholarly perspective—for example, philosophical, economic, political, theological, historical, and sociological. We are especially interested in papers that explore immigration and conversion in any context.

**Mission Statement:**

The overall purpose of this seminar is to promote interreligious and interdisciplinary dialogue and reflection on immigration, broadly conceived. Globalization and the ever-increasing movement of individuals and groups across multiple types of borders are fertile ground for theological and religious exploration. The issue



of immigration and religion is especially timely. This seminar continues the work of scholars of diverse religious, cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender identities whose collaborations resulted in the publication of *Strangers in this World: Multi-Religious Reflections on Immigration* (Fortress Press, early 2015). This new seminar will work towards publication of a follow-up volume and coordinate with other related AAR program units to help address the growing interest and need for more religious reflections on immigration.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

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

Leadership:

Chair - Alexander, Laura, University of Virginia, [lek2fb@virginia.edu](mailto:lek2fb@virginia.edu)

Chair - Hwang, Alexander Y., Xavier University, [hwangalex@yahoo.com](mailto:hwangalex@yahoo.com)

## Material Islam Seminar

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Call Text:

The Material Islam Seminar invites submissions for a pre-circulated panel session on the book and textuality. Of particular interest is how the study of the book and writing as features of Muslim culture and practice contributes to our understandings of religion and materiality.

Mission Statement:

The Material Islam Seminar is an interdisciplinary initiative bringing a variety of theoretical, methodological, and historical perspectives to the study of Islam and material culture, broadly conceived as encompassing spatial formations, objects, relics, embodiments, arts, crafts, and material forms of popular culture. The seminar aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue between the fields of art and architectural history, archeology, performance theory, folklore, practice theory, studies of space and the body, affect theory, and material religion. This seminar will be a forum through which all of these approaches and others can be represented and brought together in conversation leading to new directions, methodologies, and theories relating to the mutual imprimatur of material culture and Islam. The seminar intends to explore these various approaches to Islamic materiality, not only to demonstrate what they can contribute to Islamic Studies, but also how the particularities of Muslim cultures can advance the study of religion and materiality more generally. The Material Islam Seminar will convene annually at the AAR for five years (2014-2019) to discuss pre-circulated papers on specific thematic topics including the challenges and opportunities of interdisciplinary research, the interplay between discourse, practice, and objects, and the circulation of objects and aesthetics in particular historical contexts.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Bigelow, Anna, North Carolina State University, [anna\\_bigelow@ncsu.edu](mailto:anna_bigelow@ncsu.edu)

Chair - GhaneaBassiri, Kambiz, Reed College, [ghaneabk@reed.edu](mailto:ghaneabk@reed.edu)

## Navarātri Seminar

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### Call Text:

We welcome and encourage you to submit papers that examine how the enactment of the different iterations of Navarātri creates social meaning in their different contexts. To that end and developing the overarching themes of our inquiry in the first year of our seminar, we welcome papers in the following areas:

- The festival as mediator
- The festival as a means to create, enhance, or challenge power
- The festival as site of resistance
- The festival as occasion to showcase the domestic and the social
- The festival as carrier of different meanings
- The festival as an event that transforms space and time
- The festival as an occasion for reflexivity
- The festival as a means of subversion
- The festival as occasion for social, ritual, and for individual change
- The festival as presented in popular media, such as film and television

### Mission Statement:

This Unit 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](mailto:cbs852s@gmail.com)

Chair – Huesken, Ute, University of Oslo, [ute.huesken@ikos.uio.no](mailto:ute.huesken@ikos.uio.no)

## New Materialism, Religion, and Planetary Thinking Seminar

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Call Text:

This project is an attempt to map out the connections and differences between immanent frameworks of thought in an effort to provide some eco-intellectual commons for thinking within the planetary community. Though there is a growing body of literature on the New Materialism's (NM's is our common umbrella category for these newer theoretical ways of thinking about immanence) and on Religion and Ecology/ Religion and Nature, there has been very little that brings these discourses together to explore their interconnections, possible historical connections, and possible points of productive tension. Our aim in this four-year seminar is to bring together some of the scholars working in "religion and ecology/nature" with some of the scholars working in the NM's in an attempt to map out our combined resources for thinking immanence. Furthermore, we hope to begin to explore some of the deep historical (and conceptual) connections between newer forms of thinking immanence, with some of the older religious and philosophical traditions. Finally, we want to offer some critical and constructive suggestions for future thinking about humans as planetary creatures that specifically emerge from our conversations over the next 4 years. The first year, 2016, highlighted different forms of immanent thought from various religious traditions. This year, 2017, will bring these forms of immanent thought into dialogue with newer forms of thinking immanence, including: Religious Naturalisms, Process Thought, Emergence Theory, The New Materialisms, Object Oriented Ontology, and Queer Theory. This is a closed seminar and we are not accepting outside papers this year. However, all are welcome to attend our panel at the AAR in 2017.

Mission Statement:

Recently, a number of methods and ideas for re-thinking ideas as part of the rest of the natural world (including religious ideas and values) have appeared on the religious studies landscape. The ideas of emergence theory, new materialisms, and object-oriented ontologies are all geared toward thinking about religion and science, ideas and nature, values and matter from within what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari call a "single plane" of existence. Others within the field of "religion and ecology/nature" are skeptical of these "postmodern" methods and theories and claim rightly that ideas from various religious traditions such as pantheism, panentheism, animism, and even co-dependent arising already do the intellectual work of rethinking "religion and nature" together onto an immanent plane of existence. This closed seminar will begin to explore some of the links and differences between these older religious traditions of thinking immanence with more recent post-modern theoretical moves toward spatially-oriented ways of thinking.

Rather than being a final reflection on these connections and differences, this seminar calls for a more sustained comparative study of these different spatial approaches. Recently, a number of methods and ideas for re-thinking ideas as part of the rest of the natural world (including religious ideas and values) have appeared on the religious studies landscape. The ideas of emergence theory, new materialisms, and object-oriented ontologies are all geared toward thinking about religion and science, ideas and nature, values and matter from within what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari call a "single plane" of existence.

Anonymity: Other (please explain below)

Method of submission:

Other

We are not accepting submissions from outside of the seminar participants this year.

Leadership:

Chair - Tucker, Mary Evelyn, Yale University, [maryevelyn.tucker@yale.edu](mailto:maryevelyn.tucker@yale.edu)

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

## New Perspectives on Religion in the Philippines Seminar

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Call Text:

For this third year of a five-year seminar series we are encouraging the submission of proposals for full research papers that address any aspect of religion in the Philippines from a global perspective while suggesting promising new avenues of research within the field. We welcome submissions from all scholars, but scheduling priority may be given to previously-confirmed participants.

For next year's session(s) we are particularly looking for papers addressing the following issues:

- moments and movements of protest and dissent in Filipino religion
- alternative religions and new religious movements in the Philippines

Scholars interested in being part of this conversation are encouraged to contact the chairs for more information and/or details about submitting a proposal. In order to facilitate substantive conversation during the panel, this seminar will participate in the AAR Full Paper Submission system. Full drafts of all accepted papers will be posted online several weeks prior to the Annual Meeting, being accessible to AAR members only.

Mission Statement:

This seminar serves as a space at AAR for presenting and discussing innovative research on religion in the Philippines and strives to develop new perspectives in the study of its religious history. The Philippines has always been a crossroads of diverse religious encounters: between indigenous religions, Islam, Iberian and American Catholicism, Protestantism, indigenous Christian and non-Christian traditions, as well as various Charismatic movements. At the same time, it has been a marginal space, at the geographical margin of Asia and the intellectual margins of scholarship on religion in Southeast Asia and the study of Christianity and Islam. In response to these concerns, this five-year seminar on "New Perspectives on Religion in the Philippines" will contribute to understanding the Philippines as an important node in a global history of transregional and transcontinental religious interactions. It pursues two goals: publishing an extensive edited volume outlining a broad and comparative perspective on religion in the Philippines, as well as establishing a public forum at AAR for discussing the study of religion in the Philippines. As a group we are always open to new voices and topics, please get into contact with the chairs if you want to become involved.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - de la Cruz, Deirdre, University of Michigan, [ddelac@umich.edu](mailto:ddelac@umich.edu)

Chair - Hermann, Adrian, University of Hamburg, [adrian.hermann@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.hermann@gmail.com)

## Origen and the Roots of “Human Freedom” and “Human Dignity” in the West Seminar

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### Call Text:

The Origen and the Roots of Human Dignity and Human Freedom in the West Seminar is seeking papers that explore issues of the reception of the thought of Origen of Alexandria as it relates to the understanding of Human Freedom and Human Dignity in theological and philosophical texts, as well as the practical influence of these ideas at work in lived communities. Papers comparing and contrasting the thought of Origen with other systems of thought such as Oxford Platonism, German Idealism, or American Theological Existentialism, for example, are welcome. The purpose of this seminar is to receive peer level review of papers on Origen’s thought in relation to the regnant ideas of human freedom and human dignity. Selected papers will be pre-circulated to attendees and panel members for discussion during the seminar, so papers should be in a readable format with citations and relevant notes.

### Mission Statement:

The mission of the ‘Origen and the Roots of Human Freedom and Human Dignity in the West’ seminar is to foster focused discussion about the philosophical and theological roots behind the modern Western conception of humans as free, valuable, and dignified beings. This seminar is particular interested in the reception of the works of Origen of Alexandria in various times and places in relation to notions of ‘human freedom’ and ‘human dignity’ in those contexts. This seminar was started members of the EU-funded “History of Human Freedom and Human Dignity in Western Civilization” project. At the annual seminar, discussion will be steered towards comparing and contrasting the thought of Origen with another school of thought such as Oxford Platonism, German Idealism, or American Theological Existentialism, for example.

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

### Method of submission:

PAPERS

### Leadership:

Chair - Jacobson, Anders Christian, Aarhus University, [alj@cas.au.dk](mailto:alj@cas.au.dk)

## Political Theology Seminar

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### Call Text:

For the first year of the Seminar we are planning a pre-arranged roundtable discussing the way in which the theoretical resources of political theology can be applied in concrete contexts, with particular attention to their relevance for the rise of authoritarian ideologies in the US and elsewhere.

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 – Newheiser, David, Australian Catholic University, [David.Newheiser@acu.edu.au](mailto:David.Newheiser@acu.edu.au)

Chair – Radzins, Inese, Pacific School of Religion, [iradzins@psr.edu](mailto:iradzins@psr.edu)

## Religion and US Empire Seminar

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Call Text:

The AAR Seminar on Religion and U.S. Empire, which will be in its fourth year, invites individual paper proposals for a session on “Experiences of US Empire and the Making of Religions.” This panel aims to build on recent studies that explore how categories of “religion” and “religions” were not only imposed on colonized peoples through unilateral imperial processes, but also invented, renegotiated, and contested through reciprocal (if asymmetrical) exchanges in diverse settings and contingent circumstances. How might studying the reception of U.S. empire reveal ways in which colonized populations and all those affected by American expansion participated actively (albeit unequally) in the production of “religion” in response to, reaction against, and resistance to American imperialism?

Papers will be pre-circulated to encourage discussion and debate; however, we welcome all interested participants to the session even when advance reading of the materials is not possible. Panelists will provide a brief overview of their work at the beginning of the session.

Mission Statement:

This seminar supports a critical examination of the complex relationship between religion and US empire from the formal inception of the US as a nation-state to the present. The seminar will encourage attention to fundamental theoretical issues relating to religion and US expansionism, including but not limited to the following: the co-constitution of race, religion, and nation; the political and institutional mechanics of empire; the role of civic, ethnic, and religious nationalisms in supporting and critiquing empire; the value of transnational and national approaches to understanding US religious history; and the implications of reconceiving the standard periodization of US history to depart from standard state-building categories. The specific research projects of the collaborators attend to such issues as militarism and the materiality of religion and empire; the influence of empire on rituals, practices, and beliefs of US public religion; and the linkages between colonial administrators, missionaries, and the scientific study of religion.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Curtis, Heather D., Tufts University, [heather.curtis@tufts.edu](mailto:heather.curtis@tufts.edu)

Chair - Leavelle, Tracy, Creighton University, [tracy.leavelle@creighton.edu](mailto:tracy.leavelle@creighton.edu)

## Religion, Attire, and Adornment in North America Seminar

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### Call Text:

For 2017, we invite papers related to the theme of religion, dress, and fashion in North America, including but not limited to: conflicts between religiously-sanctioned dress and cultural fashion norms; religious ideations of fashionable dress; and biographies of objects/artifacts showing the connections between religion and fashion.

### 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 – Dallam, Marie, University of Oklahoma, [mwdallam@ou.edu](mailto:mwdallam@ou.edu)

## Religions and the Families in North America Seminar

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### 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 scholars to engage in a five-yearlong seminar at the annual meeting of the AAR where we will workshop papers, and dig deeper into the issues surrounding religion and family with the ultimate goal of producing an edited volume. Participants are expected to commit to being present for the subsequent five AARs and to comment on pre-circulated papers.

We are seeking scholars who are researching topics across broad range of family configurations, religious traditions, and historical eras. We are particularly interested in ensuring that we include papers from all of North America: Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and the United States.

Topics might include, but are not limited to the following:

- Religion's role in the (re)production of families
- Rituals that create and sustain families
- How families work with and against religious prescriptions for childrearing
- The role of families in religious and political rhetoric

**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:**

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Chair – Ridgely, Susan, University of Wisconsin – Madison, [susan.ridgely@wisc.edu](mailto:susan.ridgely@wisc.edu)

## **Transnational Religious Expression: Between Asia and North America Seminar**

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**Call Text:**

The Seminar on Transnational Religious Expression: Between Asia and North America invites papers on our theme for this year, Theories & Methods: Studying Transnational Religions.

Papers should focus on a specific case study while also theorizing issues in the study of transnational religion such as adaptation, translation, circulation, appropriation, and transculturation, and/or presenting innovative methodologies with which to study transnational religious expression. We especially encourage new models for theorizing the multidirectional processes in transnational religion, specifically the global flows of ideas



and practices between Asia and North America. Papers will be posted to the AAR website in advance of the annual meeting, so that the seminar can focus on discussion among participants and observers.

**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 erode 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. Our initial set of themes, subject to change in discussion among participants as the seminar develops, are *Theories & Methods: Studying Transnational Religions* (2017), *Immigration, Missionization, & Other Border Crossings* (2018), *Pilgrimage & Religious Tourism* (2019), *Markets, Science, and Other Secularizing Forces* (2020), *From the Counter-Culture to the Mainstream* (2021).

**Anonymity:**

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

**Method of submission:**

PAPERS

**Leadership:**

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Chair – Gayley, Holly, University of Colorado Boulder, [gayley@colorado.edu](mailto:gayley@colorado.edu)

## **Video Gaming and Religion Seminar**

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**Call Text:**

"Thank you Mario! But our Princess is in another Castle!"

Our Seminar invites papers that critically engage with gender, religion, and video gaming. Like in traditional media, gender is one of the most pervasive stereo-types in video gaming. Yet have video games changed because of an increase in female and LGBTQ players and game designers? How is the depiction of religion affected by this change? We are especially interested in papers engaged with theoretical and methodological debates within religious studies, gaming studies and/or gender studies, case studies drawn from a variety of countries and cultures, or reflections on new research areas or challenges for the future. We are interested in papers that break the traditional paper-reading format through a three-part presentation: therefore, next

year presenters should first give a short description (5 minutes) of the game they are analyzing. Second, the session will break to give the audience a chance to play the games being described on consuls or other devices. Finally, the presenters will analyze the game by presenting their thesis and evidence (10 minutes).

In addition, we will have two possible co-sponsored panels:

- Religion and Virtual Reality, and Augmented Reality (together with the Religion, Media and Culture Unit)  
With the invention of technical devices for augmented and virtual reality, the question arises how the dichotomy between online and offline bodies can hold up any longer. What does that mean for practices within games which are classified as religious? If a gamer for example is conducting a prayer by raising his arms before the screen, is it just a virtual or an "as if" ritual? And are there differences for the respective practice, e.g. sacrificing humans? Do the gaming experiences change for the individual gamers, and if so, how? What does that mean for designing a game? And what does that mean for theories and methods in analyzing religion and digital media? These are the questions (and more) we want to discuss in this panel. We are seeking innovative and interactive elements in this panel, so we will have some of the actual new technologies and integrate an interactive time period with in the panel, where the games can be used by the audience.
- Playing Dead: A Joint Session for Death, Dying and Beyond and Religion and Gaming (together with the Death and Dying Unit)  
How do video games interpret death and the afterlife? How has the history of gaming shaped contemporary video game notions of death, dying and beyond? How do the "lives" of players intersect with religious notions of life, death, and concepts of afterlife? In what ways do alternate realities reflect life beyond the grave? How, and in what ways, do the rules of games structure alternate conceptions of death, dying and beyond? What do games reveal about our religious understanding of life, death, and possible afterlives? Following the success of this year's Video Game and Religion Seminar, for this joint session, we anticipate a lightning round of seven presentations with five minutes each (for a total of 35 minutes of presentation), followed by an interactive gaming session for panelists/the audience. It is our belief that allowing a participatory experience of the games themselves will facilitate an interactive and fruitful experience for both presenters and the audience alike.

#### Mission Statement:

Just like films helped to illuminate and expose the religiosity of the twentieth century, video games now depict the religious within the twenty-first century. "Video games" describes electronic forms of play across all platforms, from personal computers, consuls to mobile devices. Often in the religious studies video gaming is not taken seriously. We aim to correct this by establishing and maintaining a multidisciplinary network for the discussion of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of religion and video gaming. We will collect, systematize and develop the various recent multidisciplinary approaches to research and teaching. We have two specific deliverables for the end of the five-year period. First, we will craft an edited volume, tentatively titled *Video Games and Religion: Methods and Approaches* that will bring together the cutting edge work of leading scholars in this emerging field. Second, we will publish our results from our seminar in a special issue of the online journal *gamevironments*.

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

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

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Chair - Radde-Antweiler, Kerstin, University of Bremen, [radde@uni-bremen.de](mailto:radde@uni-bremen.de)