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Note from the Student Director

Bhakti Mamtara



Here are a few tips for navigating Boston, MA, and maximizing the opportunities at the AAR's Annual Meeting in November.

- Unless you have a special side trip in mind, you probably don't need to rent a car. The T's green line passes through the Hynes Convention

Center as well as several of the hotels.

- Check out our many [Especially for Students programs](#), including our Student Welcome and Business Meeting, Student Lounge Roundtables on professional development topics such as the session over lunch on “Pedagogical Uses of Social Media: Twitter, Facebook, and Beyond,” our panel on “Religious Scholars as Humanitarians: Publications, Pedagogies, and the Protection of the Most Vulnerable,” and our cosponsored session “Protecting the Vulnerable on Campus.”
- Our business meeting is on Sunday from 9:00 to 9:30 AM in the Hynes Convention Center-303 (Third Level).
- If you are on the job market, please register for the [Employment Center](#). It allows you to post your CV and message search committees, and, most importantly, gives the AAR a clearer picture about who is on the job market.

As my two-year term as student director and representative on the national board comes to a close, I would love to hear from you with any concerns, questions, or comments. I also encourage you to contact your regional student directors. Our contact information can be found [here](#). We look forward to seeing to you!

Annual Meeting 2017

The AAR Annual Meeting will be held in Boston, MA, November 18–21. For general information including registration and housing, program units, sessions, the employment center, and much more, [see the AAR Annual Meeting webpage](#).

The Graduate Student Committee (GSC) is offering a range of programs for graduate students at the Annual Meeting. This year we eagerly anticipate a full session of roundtable discussions crafted to meet the needs of graduate students. [This handout](#) provides details on the events organized for graduate students. Scroll below to check out video teasers from our presenters, and feel free to share on social media! You can also view all our roundtable videos on our [YouTube channel](#).

Student Lounge Roundtables

All of the roundtable sessions will take place in the Hynes Convention Center–

303 (Third Level) unless otherwise noted.

[Special Topics Forum](#) - *Religious Scholars as Humanitarians: Publications, Pedagogies, and the Protection of the Most Vulnerable*

Saturday, November 18

9:00–11:30 AM

Sheraton Boston-Grand & Independence (Second Level)

Be on the lookout for our upcoming Special Topics Forum (STF) during our annual meeting; it is sure to be an exciting discussion. Our debate this year will focus on 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. Through a combination of presentations and workshop activities, 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. The featured speakers of this STF work on a diverse range of topics at the nexus of humanitarian and scholarly work, including the advancement of nonhuman animal rights, the lived experience of Muslim feminists, and the creation of public humanities projects that weave together knowledge about faith, the environment, and social equality for educational purposes. We hope to see you there!

Presiders: Chase L. Way (Claremont Graduate University) & Bhakti Mamtora (University of Florida)

Panelists:

- Brianne Donaldson, Rice University | *Religious Studies and Ethical Curiosity: Class Projects that Reveal Unseen Stories in a Midwest Slaughterhouse Town*
- Nayawiyyah Muhammad, Claremont Graduate University | *The Women's Mosque of America and Social Justice in American Mosques*
- A. Whitney Sanford, University of Florida | *Sacred Waters, Contested Histories, and the Public Good in the American South*

Responding: Dr. Greg Johnson (University of Colorado at Boulder)

Special Roundtable Session: Pedagogical Uses of Social Media: Twitter, Facebook, and Beyond

Saturday, November 18

11:30 AM–1:00 PM

Cosponsors: Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning, SBL Student Advisory Board

Please join us for lunch and an interactive presentation about teaching in higher education. Advance registration is required. Please contact bhaktim@ufl.edu for RSVP and more information.

Many of us and our students use YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to curate our identities, present ourselves to our communities, and ascribe meaning to our worlds. What are effective ways to use social media in the classroom? How can it be integrated with more traditional teaching strategies? How can we increase critical thinking about social media? This session explores effective and critically aware ways to incorporate social media in the classroom and in public discussions of religion.

Panelists:

- Mary T. Stimming, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion
- Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Earlham College
- Brooke Lester, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Effective Strategies for Scholarly Publication

with Steven Felix-Jager

Saturday, November 18

1:00–2:30 PM

At this roundtable session you will receive guidelines for establishing and maintaining a strong publication record as a young scholar. Come learn how to "break into" publishing! <https://youtu.be/p8AH47GErj4>

How to Make Department Service Work for You: Establishing Collective Resources

with Candance Mixon and Shannon Trospen Schorey

Saturday, November 18

2:30–4:00 PM

Landing a successful academic job requires that you cultivate your skills as a

professional researcher and teacher, but it also requires that you demonstrate your ability to help build a thriving and substantial department life. This roundtable is geared toward two specific goals: 1) helping you identify how and where you can begin to make important interventions in the collective life of your department and 2) mobilizing those interventions for the job market.

Educational Entrepreneurship: Monetizing Your Expertise through Digital Teaching

with Raj Balkaran

Saturday, November 18

4:00–5:30 PM

This roundtable teaches graduate students who are passionate about teaching how to pursue a rewarding, gainful career as an online educational entrepreneur. <https://youtu.be/HZa6weFNsMk>

Cosponsored Session: Protecting the Vulnerable on Campus

Saturday, November 18

4:00–6:00 PM

Sheraton Boston – Grand & Independence (Second Level)

Cosponsors: Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty Committee, and the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Committee

Presider: Eddie S. Glaude, Princeton University

For many of us who study or work in colleges and seminary campuses today it may be easy to ignore the vulnerable at our institutions. Yet the most vulnerable are often at risk or subject to discrimination and exploitation based on inequities of power, money, lack of social net, or means to voice their concerns about campus life and work. This panel will examine what needs attention and the strategies that vulnerable people and their allies can use to decrease vulnerability and increase solidarity. Special attention will be paid to the status of, and strategies being deployed by, the LGBT+ community, graduate students, people of color, low paid workers, and non-tenured faculty.

Panelists:

- Cameron Partridge, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, San Francisco | *Although the Doors Were Shut: Cultivating Courageous Community at the Borders of the Academy*

- Prea Persaud, University of Florida | *It Doesn't Always Feel Good: Redefining Notions of Inclusion and Moving beyond "Diversity"*
- James Keenan, Boston College | *Solidarity within the Faculty*
- Hussein Rashid, Islamicate LLC | *Ad Junk: Accounting for Different Vulnerabilities in Vulnerable Professional Position*
- Kerry Danner, Georgetown University | *Just Employment: Solidarity among Campus Workers*

Employment and Recruitment from an HR Perspective

with Jessica Lee Ehinger

Sunday, November 19

10:00–11:30 AM

This session will focus on how to get a job outside the traditional tenure track, including some differences in the job market, how to apply, and what to expect from an organization's human resources. This is a great opportunity for anyone who is job hunting or for anyone who works with graduate students as an adviser or is in student services or career services.

https://youtu.be/J4esj_oNvM4

Balancing Act: Creating a Diverse and Dynamic CV

with Katelyn Carver

Sunday, November 19

11:30 AM–1:00 PM

Career paths for academics are becoming more diverse and varied by the day. As such, even with academia one cannot depend on conferences and papers and a few chapters in compilations alongside a list of your thesis and dissertation supervisors to make you stand out. What, for instance, is this "Public Engagement" section all about? What exactly constitutes teaching experience? Is there a way to make what you did sound more like what you did, versus what it may have been titled at some point, by someone who may or may not have been involved in the event itself? Crafting a CV, particularly for those positions outside of traditional academic posts (or even for those posts within) is not difficult, it is merely different. This roundtable session discusses and workshops how to frame, format, organize, and phrase your experience and prepare a CV for every exciting opportunity you encounter.

Using Teaching Opportunities to Expand Your Skill Set

with Kristy Slominski

Sunday, November 19

1:00–2:30 PM

This workshop will address ways in which teaching experiences can be used to develop multiple areas of competency beyond the classroom for the non-teaching aspects of your career. <https://youtu.be/5NW0MJ3K7PQ>

Student-Centered Learning: A Practical Guide

with Gwendolyn Gillson

Sunday, November 19

2:30–4:00 PM

Join Gwendolyn Gillson (University of Iowa) to discover student-centered learning strategies and ways to implement them in your classroom.

https://youtu.be/MFMYXdTS_uA

Researching, Managing, and Writing with Technology: A Hands-on Exploration of Online Tools

with Kalpesh Bhatt

Sunday, November 19

4:00–5:30 PM

This roundtable workshop will give you a hands-on exploration of online tools, such as Zotero and Evernote, which help you manage your extensive research in any form and create mind-maps and workflows to write systematically across multiple devices. They also keep your content safe in case you lose your laptop or iPad. <https://youtu.be/R9eVaDztAkY>

The Potential Value of Genre-Based Pedagogy in Religious Studies

with Nathan Fredrickson

Monday, November 20

9:00–10:30 AM

Come learn about genre-based pedagogy, an enjoyable method to promote critical thinking in the religious studies classroom!

<https://youtu.be/WmPSDRf93Jg>

Writing Successful Grant Applications: Dos and Don'ts

with Peter Althouse

Monday, November 20

10:30 AM–12:00 PM

Applying for academic grants and external funding is a daunting task. The competition is fierce with an average of 5–10% acceptance rate. So why bother? Aside from the fact that university and college administrations encourage professors to seek external funding to supplement faculty resources and often tie successful application to merit review and promotion, the value for researchers is that they can conduct important work that leads to new knowledge. In this discussion, Althouse will draw on experience as a peer reviewer who has evaluated research grants for different funding agencies and success in securing grants to offer tips on how to make successful applications.

Balancing Graduate School with Other Dimensions of Life and Identity

with Nicholas Werse

Monday, November 20

12:00–1:30 PM

This session discusses how to fulfill academic responsibilities that come with graduate school (teaching, researching, studying, and publishing) while maintaining one's health and well-being. <https://youtu.be/s38wlqgYkoE>

ImaginePhD: A Career Exploration and Planning Tool for Humanities and Social Sciences

Monday, November 20

1:00–3:30 PM

Launched in fall 2017, ImaginePhD is a free and confidential career exploration and planning tool for humanities and social science PhDs. Powered by the Graduate Career Consortium and created by more than 50 graduate-level career and professional development leaders across the United States and Canada, this platform provides a unique opportunity for PhDs to assess their skills, interests, and values; map those onto career paths; and create an individual development plan that supports degree completion and professional/personal development.

Please join Sarah Peterson, ImaginePhD Content Lead, for this interactive training session to learn how to use this tool and integrate it into departments. To make the most of this session, please bring a laptop or tablet.

Panelist: Sarah Peterson, Atlanta, GA

Publish or Perish for Graduate Students

with Miguel De La Torre

Monday, November 20

1:30–3:00 PM

Writing is not a gift inherited but a skill that anyone can learn. Join us to discuss the nuts-and-bolts of how to publish. <https://youtu.be/q3qp7rT8Se8>

Tips for Integrating Guest Faith Practitioners in the Classroom

with Joshua Patterson

Monday, November 20

3:00–4:30 PM

As graduate student instructors of religion, we might face challenges of expertise or authority with our students or teach students who have never encountered individuals of a particular religious tradition. Bringing faith practitioners to speak in our classes might be a useful strategy to expose students to insider views, hear from more authoritative sources, and encounter faith practitioners perhaps for the first time. In spite of the potential benefits of inviting faith practitioners to our classes, there are also potential challenges. How do we ensure that these experiences are appropriately bracketed to maintain academic rigor? Do certain institutional contexts or programs support this more than others? How does our status as graduate students affect these concerns, especially as graduate students take on such a large role of undergraduate instruction? This roundtable session will discuss these issues and discuss ways of effectively bringing guest faith practitioners into the classroom.

Dissertation + Baby: How to Do Two of the Hardest Things You've Ever Done in Your Life Simultaneously, with Little Money or Sleep

with Regina Walton

Monday, November 20

4:30–6:00 PM

This workshop will guide participants in planning how to make good progress on their dissertations while parenting young children. Topics discussed include: setting realistic expectations about the writing process and parenting; putting a

support network in place; caring for yourself physically and spiritually while under stress; addressing the financial challenges of grad school; managing your teaching load; and staying connected to your scholarly community. The presenter wrote her dissertation while caring for her two children and has since published a number of scholarly articles and essays and a volume of poetry.

News from our Annual Regional Meetings

News from the Mid-Atlantic Region

Greetings from the Mid-Atlantic Region! We are excited to receive your proposals for the MAR-AAR 2018 regional conference! This year's conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on March 15–16, 2018. The theme is Religion and Theology in a Crossroads Age: The Anticipatory Scholar. Our 2018 MAR-AAR Call for Papers is available [here](#). Conference registration will open by early November 2017.

In addition to our traditional CFP, the Mid-Atlantic Region is hosting its second annual Undergraduate Symposium at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on March 14, 2018. The theme for the symposium is also Religion and Theology in a Crossroads Age: The Anticipatory Scholar. Our 2018 MAR-AAR Undergraduate Symposium Call for Papers is available [here](#). Conference registration will open by early November.

News from the Southeast Region

The Southeast region's AAR and SBL are pleased to announce that the SECSOR 2018 meeting will be held from March 2–4, 2018, in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Atlanta Marriott Perimeter Center. Meeting and hotel registration will be available no later than January 1, 2018. Further information about the conference including panel themes can be found [here](#).

News from the Upper Midwest Region

The Upper Midwest Region invites proposals for its upcoming annual conference that will be held from April 13–14, 2018, at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. The plenary speakers this year are Amos Yong,

of Fuller Theological Seminary, and Bernard Levinson, of the University of Minnesota. More information about the conference and its Call for Papers can be found [here](#).

See the full list of regional meetings [here](#).

Facebook Pages for Student Members

Our [Student Members and Friends of the American Academy of Religion](#) Facebook page is available for all members and friends of the AAR. Members can post calls for papers, job listings, requests for information, forthcoming publications, and more.

Stay connected with students and events in your region by "liking" your regional Facebook page:

- [Student Members of the AAR EIR](#) (Eastern International Region)
- [American Academy of Religion, Mid-Atlantic Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Midwest Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR New England-Maritime Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Pacific Northwest Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR and SBL Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Southeast Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Upper Midwest Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Western Region](#)
- [American Academy of Religion, Southwest Region](#)

