



## Fostering Excellence In the Study of Religion

### American Academy of Religion

### In This Issue

Welcome to May "Teaching and Learning Month" in the AAR! Each May there will be a focus on teaching theories and practices in the academy. This month's focus is on **Sustainability** (see below). The AAR's Teaching and Learning Committee welcomes you to explore some exciting new developments in teaching in our fields. Learn about our committee and our work on the [AAR website](#).

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#### A MESSAGE FROM THE AAR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Colleagues:

We often think of the work of the AAR as primarily about research. Indeed, our motto, "Fostering Excellence in the Study of Religion," might be interpreted to mean that research is all we do. Nothing could be further from the truth, however. The AAR fosters research, but also supports professional development, several publishing efforts, and advocacy for the public understanding of religion. As we enter May, a month in which many communities and institutions celebrate teaching, the AAR's Teaching and Learning Committee is promoting yet another important aspect of our work: encouraging creative pedagogy among members of our Academy. In this special e-bulletin issue, the Committee has highlighted a number of resources, both within and beyond the AAR, that provide opportunities for strengthening teaching and learning in the field. We invite you to peruse the information included and explore items of particular interest to you.

With every good wish and with thanks for your participation in the work of our Academy, I remain

Sincerely yours

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Jack Fitzmier  
Executive Director

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE AAR PRESIDENT



Teaching and learning are integral parts of a scholar's life. The AAR promotes innovative pedagogies, collaborative learning, and the engagement of the intellect and the senses in the teaching of religion. The teaching award is given this year to Katie Geneva Cannon, whose passion for teaching is an inspiration for us all.

Sincerely yours,

Kwok Pui Lan  
President

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## FOCUS ON TEACHING: SUSTAINABILITY AND RELIGION

Here are some exciting happenings and resources in sustainability and teaching religion:

The upcoming May 2011 [\*Spotlight on Teaching\*](#) will focus on teaching about Sustainability. One of the coeditors of *Spotlight*, Reid B. Locklin, explains: "This issue of *Spotlight on Teaching* offers a vision of teaching that is truly well-grounded . . . in the earth. Contributors reveal how a commitment to theory, performative learning, service learning, and interdisciplinary study all open windows into teaching about religion and ecology." There will be links to resources and ecopedagogies. Look for this issue in mid-May in [\*Religious Studies News\*](#). In the meantime, check out these journals on teaching about sustainability, the environment, and ecological issues:

[\*Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology\*](#)

[\*Green Theory and Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy\*](#)

At the San Francisco AAR Meeting there will be a sustainability workshop on "[Teaching about Religion and Sustainability: The Animal Question](#)" on Friday, November 18, 1:45–5:30 PM. This workshop is sponsored by the [AAR Task Force on Sustainability](#).

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**2011 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD RECIPIENT  
ANNOUNCED**

Save 25%  
on  
**Religion**  
Titles

from

**The  
Rowman &  
Littlefield  
Publishing  
Group**





The Teaching and Learning Committee is pleased to announce **Katie Geneva Cannon** is the recipient of the 2011 Excellence in Teaching Award. Cannon, Annie Scales Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Presbyterian Seminary-Presbyterian School of Education, will make remarks and engage questions and answers from the audience during the Special Topics Forum at this year's Annual Meeting in San Francisco, California.

Here are a couple of provocative questions from Katie G. Cannon to students and teachers about teaching and learning:

1. What have been your best times in the classroom, the times when you really looked forward to teaching? What contributed to that?
2. What questions are we not asking about education in the twenty-first century; that if we did, might change our classroom into a truly transformative space for maximizing learning?
3. What one specific thing might you do or what choice might you make that would improve teaching and learning in your existential context?

#### **Selected Reading List compiled by Katie G. Cannon**

Boesak, Allan. *The Tenderness of Conscience: African Renaissance and the Spirituality of Politics*. Sun Press, 2005.

Byrd, Rudolph P., ed. *The World Has Changed: Conversations with Alice Walker*. New Press, 2010.

Danticat, Edwidge. *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*. Princeton University Press, 2010.

Davis, Barbara Gross. *Tools for Teaching*. Second ed. Jossey-Bass, 2009.

Fairclough, Adam. *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South*. Harvard University Press, 2007.

Holmes, Linda Janet, and Cheryl A. Walls. *Savoring the Salt: The Legacy of Toni Cade Bambara*. Temple University Press, 2008.

Lehmann, Kay, and Lisa Chamberlin. *Making the Move to E-Learning: Putting Your Course Online*. Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2009.

Maguire, Daniel C. *Ethics: A Complete Method for Moral Choice*. Fortress Press, 2009.

Marshall, Paule. *Triangular Road: A Memoir*. Basic/Civitas Books, 2009.

Schuessler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Democratizing Biblical Studies: Toward an Emancipatory Educational Space*. Westminster/John Knox Press, 2009.

We welcome nominations for the 2012 Excellence in Teaching Award. [Please nominate a deserving teacher.](#)

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## **NEW AND IMPROVED SYLLABUS INITIATIVE!**

The AAR and the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning Theology and Religion partner to provide an improved database of syllabi in the field.

The AAR is excited and proud to announce that we will collaborate with the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion in efforts to collect and make available syllabi from various courses across the field. This effort will involve integrating and housing the syllabi currently available through the AAR Syllabus Project with the syllabi contained in the Wabash Center's [Internet Guide to Religion](#). Beginning fall 2011, the Syllabus Project will be phased out on the AAR website and members will be encouraged to review and submit syllabi through the Wabash Center site. This integration will help facilitate improved syllabi updating features along with the development of a larger, more robust database of syllabi on topics related to theology and religious studies. The AAR looks forward to this opportunity with the Wabash Center. Please stay tuned for further announcements and details.

The Syllabus Initiative needs your syllabi! Please [submit your syllabi](#) now!

To whet your appetite for the new syllabus site, [click here](#) for some sample syllabi from members of the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Task Force on Sustainability.

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## **THEATRE AS PEDAGOGY WORKSHOP AT THE AAR ANNUAL MEETING IN SAN FRANCISCO!**

Cosponsored by the AAR Teaching and Learning Committee and the Wabash Center, Friday, November 18, from 1:00–6:00 pm. Join us for an afternoon of embodied pedagogy! Victoria Rue (author of *Acting Religious: Theatre as Pedagogy in Religious Studies*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010) will be facilitating the workshop. To register, please send an e-mail to Tina Pippin at [tpippin@agnesscott.edu](mailto:tpippin@agnesscott.edu). Registration is limited to the first thirty participants.

[Here's a link](#) to the main organization on theatre as pedagogy, the Theatre and Pedagogy of the Oppressed, based on the work of Augusto Boal.

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## TEACHING RESOURCES IN RELIGIOUS AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

We are pleased to announce a new book in the AAR/OUP Teaching Series!

Rebecca Todd Peters and Bernadette McNary-Zak. *Teaching Undergraduate Research in Religious Studies*. Oxford University Press, forthcoming June 2011.

For other titles in the "Teaching Religious Studies" series, [click here](#).

[Click here](#) for a new resource on teaching religion and social justice from the Poverty Initiative at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Willie Baptist and Jan Rehmann. *Pedagogy of the Poor* (Teaching for Social Justice). Teachers College Press, 2011.

### Check out other resources on the AAR website:

Conversations are still ongoing regarding the Teagle Project on the Religion Major and Liberal Education. Check out the "[White Paper](#)." See also the discussion of the Teagle Project in the recent issue of [Teaching Theology and Religion](#).

For information about Religion in the Schools, [click here](#). Also, the [Guidelines for Teaching about Religion in K-12 Public Schools in the United States](#) may be of interest.

The AAR Teaching and Learning Committee welcomes your ideas and comments about the best way to celebrate the month of May's focus on teaching and learning. Send suggestions to the Committee Chair, Tina Pippin, at [tpippin@agnesscott.edu](mailto:tpippin@agnesscott.edu).

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