



Fostering Excellence
In the Study of Religion

American Academy of Religion

In This Issue

Friends:

Greetings from the Luce Center in Atlanta! This month's e-bulletin contains a large number of important items: news about the Annual Meeting in Montréal; AAR's efforts to support foreign scholars' entry into the United States; nominations for committee positions and ACLS Delegate; information about our Luce Summer Seminars; research grants; several calls for contributions to JAAR; and other items.

With every good wish in this early spring season, I offer you my thanks for your participation in the work of our Academy.

Jack Fitzmier
Executive Director

ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting Registration and Housing

AAR Annual Meeting Registration and Housing is now open! You must be registered to secure housing. "Advance" registration rates are in effect until September 15, 2009. Check your March issue of Religious Studies News for the Registration and Housing brochure containing all the details, and visit www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Annual_Meeting/Current_Meeting/registration.asp to register and book housing online.

Annual Meeting Proposals

If you submitted a proposal for the Annual Meeting, you should have already received notification of whether your proposal was accepted or not. If you did not receive notification and submitted your proposal using the online proposal

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system, you can check your status by logging in to the OP3 system (if you submitted a proposal as a nonmember and have since renewed your membership, you will still need to use the nonmember tracking number given at the time of your proposal in order to see the proposal's status). If the status is not listed, please contact the chairs of the Program Unit(s) to which you submitted.

Annual Meeting Program Planner

Update your mailing address now to receive a copy of the new *Annual Meeting Program Planner*, to be mailed in early June to all current members of the AAR. The *Program Planner* will contain full information for all AAR Annual Meeting sessions and a listing of the day, time, and theme for all Additional Meetings sessions. The *Annual Meeting Program Planner* is a great way to begin your Annual Meeting planning.

Make sure your membership address is listed correctly in the AAR member directory by logging in to www.aarweb.org/Members/My_Account. Please allow 3–4 weeks for delivery. For more information on Annual Meeting publications, check out the May issue of *Religious Studies News*.

Help to Green our Annual Meeting Travel

The AAR is making it easy for members to purchase Renewable Energy Credits when traveling to the Annual Meeting. By simply clicking a box on the online registration page, members can choose to give \$15 to NativeEnergy. The AAR's Sustainability Task Force selected NativeEnergy because of its commitment to reducing greenhouse gases while supporting its sustainability projects. NativeEnergy helps you to assist Native American, farmer-owned, community based renewable energy projects that create social, economic, and environmental benefits. These projects will displace electricity from fossil fuels and reduce other greenhouse gas emissions on your behalf, making up for the CO2 emissions you can't avoid. We encourage you to make this inexpensive commitment to helping make our meetings more environmentally friendly. The AAR will collect the funds and purchase the offsets immediately before the Annual Meeting.

Sponsor an International Scholar

The 2009 Annual Meeting's international focus is on Globalization of Religion in North America. For information on ways to help bring one of the six scholars to the Annual Meeting, and to your institution, contact Jessica Davenport (jdavenport@aarweb.org) for details.

The scholars available for sponsorship are:

- Azyumardi Azra, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia
- Shrivatsa Goswami, Vrindavan, India
- Koichi Mori, Doshisha University, Japan
- Sylvia Marcos, Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos, Mexico
- Kim Knott, University of Leeds, UK
- Nilüfer Göle, L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France

10. [Receipts for Membership and Annual Meeting](#)

Account Information

Name: [business]
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Contact Us

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Atlanta, GA 30329-4205

Tel: 404-727-3049
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www.aarweb.org

Leadership Workshop

The Academic Relations Committee will begin a three-year sequence of workshops exploring the implications of the Teagle/AAR White Paper "[The Religion Major and Liberal Education](#)" in Montréal on Friday, November 6, 2009. This year's day-long workshop, "Three Religion Majors Meet in a Café: What Do They Have in Common?" is led by Eugene V. Gallagher, Connecticut College, and will address five common characteristics the White Paper identified of a religious studies major: intercultural and comparative, multidisciplinary, critical, integrative, and creative and constructive. Participants will then explore the presence of these characteristics in the design of majors in different institutional contexts (small public, large public, private, and theological). The workshop will conclude with presentations and discussions about how we address these characteristics in ways attentive both to our responsibilities as educators and to the students and the reasons they are in our programs. Registration can be done when you register for the Annual Meeting. Since there is a limit of 75 people, we strongly encourage early registration. See the March issue of *Religious Studies News* for more details on the workshop.

Sustainability Workshop

The AAR Sustainability Task Force is sponsoring a half-day workshop at the Annual Meeting in Montréal on Friday, November 6. The workshop, "Religious Studies in an Age of Global Warming: Transforming Ourselves, Our Students, and Our Universities," will be led by Roger Gottlieb, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and a task force member, and Stephanie Kaza, University of Vermont. Teaching the environmental crisis poses unique challenges and opportunities for higher education. The scope and extent of the threat demands that faculty inform themselves about a host of practical, theological, moral, historical, and political concerns that probably were not part of their original scholarly field. This workshop will explore these challenges and opportunities, giving participants the chance to examine their own responses to the environmental crisis, to engage with faculty concerning teaching resources, sample syllabi and course modules, instructional themes, and ways to connect with other academic departments and the wider campus sustainability movement. Registration can be done when you register for the Annual Meeting. Early registration is encouraged as the workshop is limited to the first 75 people. See the upcoming May issue of *Religious Studies News* for more details on the workshop.

Annual Meeting Job Center

Annual Meeting Job Center preregistration is currently open for candidates. Employer preregistration will open April 20. Preregistration will close for both candidates and employers on October 12. Register early to receive full benefits. For more information, see <http://www.aarweb.org/jump/jobcenter>.

Additional Meetings

The deadline for priority scheduling of Additional Meetings is May 1, so

submit your request today! Additional Meetings requests received before that date will be published in the *Annual Meeting Program Planner*. Please use our new online Additional Meetings request system to make your request. You must login with your AAR member ID to access the system. More information about Additional Meetings policies, rates, and deadlines is available [online](#).

AAR SUPPORTS FOREIGN SCHOLAR ENTRY TO UNITED STATES

On March 24, ACLU lawyers presented oral arguments in federal court on behalf of the AAR and other organizations calling on the United States government to discontinue excluding foreign citizens from entry into the United States for ideological reasons. AAR involvement in [the lawsuit](#) stems from the government's denial of entry to [Tariq Ramadan](#) after he accepted an invitation from the AAR to attend and speak at our 2004 Annual Meeting. You may wish to sign a [petition](#) calling on Obama administration officials to discontinue ideological exclusion. Ramadan is slated to speak at the 2009 AAR [Annual Meeting](#) in Montréal.

COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The following committees and task forces will have openings this year:

- Academic Relations Committee
- Book Award Juries
- Career Services Advisory Committee
- Graduate Student Committee
- International Connections Committee
- Public Understanding of Religion Committee
- Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force
- Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee
- Status of Women in the Profession Committee
- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Theological Education Steering Committee

If you want to nominate a colleague or yourself, please send a letter explaining your interest in serving on the particular committee, your participation in the AAR, your academic and professional interests, and a CV to nominations@aarweb.org; or by fax to: 404-727-7959; or mail to:

Jack Fitzmier, Executive Director
American Academy of Religion
825 Houston Mill RD NE STE 300
Atlanta, GA 30329-4205
USA

Deadline for submittal is **May 1, 2009**.

NOMINATIONS FOR ACLS DELEGATE

The AAR invites candidates to nominate themselves or others for the position of Delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). The term of office for the Delegate is January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012. For a complete list of duties, [email us](#) or see the March *RSN*, page 11.

Nominations for this position must be made in writing, and must include:

1. A description of the nominee's academic and professional interests;
2. A summary of the nominee's activity in the AAR;
3. A statement describing the nominee's interest or promise for this assignment; and
4. A current CV.

Nominations must be received by **May 1, 2009** and should be sent to nominations@aarweb.org. Final selection will be made by President Mark Juergensmeyer in the summer of 2009.

SUMMER SEMINARS ON THEOLOGIES OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY: COHORT TWO

The American Academy of Religion is pleased to announce the formation of Cohort Two of our Luce Summer Seminars.

These week-long seminars will provide training to theological education faculty who are often preparing students for future religious leadership and ministry. The Theological Education Steering Committee invites applications from theological educators interested in pursuing the following questions. The seminars will help address the question of religious diversity as a question of faith, that is to say, as a properly theological question: What is the meaning of my neighbor's faith for mine? While we expect that the bulk of applicants will come from seminaries and divinity schools, we also welcome theological educators who teach in theology and religious studies departments.

The seminars, composed of twenty-five participants and eight instructors, are designed for those relatively new to the theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology, allowing them to learn from scholars and advance their understanding. The result of the summer seminars will be to increase the number of theological educators who can teach in the areas of theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology in a variety of institutions in which theological education takes place. All accepted applicants will be awarded a cash stipend of \$1,000, plus the grant will cover their expenses incurred in their participation in the seminars.

Cohort Two will meet June 13–20, 2010 at Union Theological Seminary, New York City; then on October 29, 2010 at the Annual Meeting, Atlanta; and, finally May 29–June 5, 2011 at the University of Chicago Divinity

School, Chicago.

The application deadline for Cohort Two is **January 15, 2010**. All accepted applicants will be notified by late February 2010. Further information on the seminars can be found [here](#).

LUCE SUMMER SEMINARS COHORT ONE PARTICIPANTS ANNOUNCED

The American Academy of Religion is pleased to announce Cohort One of the Luce Summer Seminars in Theologies of Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology:

American Academy of Religion/Henry Luce Foundation Summer Seminar Fellows

- Michel Andraos, Catholic Theological Union
- Edward Phillip Antonio, Iliff School of Theology
- Loye Ashton, Tougaloo College
- Julia Watts Belser, Missouri State University
- Sharon Betcher, Vancouver School of Theology
- Clifton Clarke, Regent University
- Marion Grau, Graduate Theological Union
- Kathleen Greider, Claremont School of Theology
- Ravi M. Gupta, College of William and Mary
- Lisa M. Hess, United Theological Seminary
- Mary E. Hess, Luther Seminary
- Emily Holmes, Christian Brothers University
- Tat-siong Benny Liew, Pacific School of Religion
- Anna Bonta Moreland, Villanova University
- Reid L. Neilson, Brigham Young University
- Stacy L. Patty, Lubbock Christian University
- Miriam Perkins, Emmanuel School of Religion
- Yolanda Pierce, Princeton Theological Seminary
- Paul F. Sands, Baylor University
- Angel Santiago-Vendrell, Memphis Theological Seminary
- Devorah Schoenfeld, St. Mary's College of Maryland
- Gerald Shenk, Eastern Mennonite Seminary
- Karla Suomala, Luther College
- Gregory Walter, St. Olaf's College
- Homayra Ziad, Trinity College

RESEARCH GRANTS

Each year the AAR awards grants of up to \$5,000 for individual and collaborative research projects. The deadline to apply for a 2009 grant is August 1, 2009. For sustainability purposes, we will no longer accept paper applications. All applicants must apply online on the AAR website. Click [here](#) for additional information.

JAAR CALL FOR PAPERS

The AAR at 100: A Centennial Reflection

The American Academy of Religion has been in existence for one hundred years. How has our understanding of religion changed in that time, and what can the past teach us about the future? We invite considerations of the implications of the trajectory of the AAR over the past one hundred years for future scholarship in the study of religion.

We are particularly interested in papers which address changes in the field of religious studies over the last twenty-five (or even one hundred) years.

Possible topics might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The effect of the rise of academic interest in religion outside of religious studies;
- The resurgence of religion in the world and its implications for understanding the religions;
- The increasing internationalization of the field;
- New subfields that have emerged in the last twenty-five years;
- The increasing interdisciplinary nature of scholarship;
- Islam's influence on the study of religion, or, the study of religion and its influence on Islam;
- The continual shift of the academic study of religion from theological schools to colleges/universities;
- The influence of social science methodologies (especially anthropology) on the study of religion;
- The flourishing of the science and religion dialogue, especially the nascent field of the cognitive neuroscience of religion; and
- The effect of philanthropic institutions on the study of religion.

JAAR invites proposals for a focus issue that explores what the AAR's past can teach us about what will be, or should be, its future. Deadline for submission is **December 1, 2009**.

Please submit papers to:

Journal of the American Academy of Religion
Department of Religious Studies
PO Box 400126
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4126

Please direct queries to jaar@virginia.edu.

Religion and Reasons: Justification, Argument, and Cultural Difference

Are religious reasons similar to or fundamentally different from scientific and scholarly reasons? The JAAR invites papers that explore the features of reason, justification, and legitimization in religious contexts. Religions provide many kinds of reasons for belief and action. Much attention, for

example, has been given to the forms of reasoning embedded in cultural forms labeled as “magic” and “divination,” and similar issues arise for a host of other practices, including textual exegesis.

Do particular examples of religious reasoning bring fundamental problems for understanding across cultures or conceptual schemes? How are reasons, whether religious or scientific, implicated in contestations for influence or power? Does consideration of religious reasoning challenge contemporary academic understandings of what counts as reason or rationality?

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- The forms of reasoning embedded in interpretative activities such as divination, dream interpretation, and textual exegesis;
- The roles of extraordinary states (such as mysticism, shamanism, possession, and paranormal phenomena) in discovering and legitimating both knowledge and norms for practice;
- The persuasive dimensions of performative practices including dance and theater;
- The philosophical grounds for argumentation, rhetoric, and cross-cultural interpretation; and
- The complexities in accounts of western, scientific, or scholarly reasoning that are contrasted with religious reasoning. We particularly encourage papers that offer both specific case studies and theoretical reflection.

Deadline for submission is Monday, **August 3, 2009**. Please submit papers to:

Journal of the American Academy of Religion
Department of Religious Studies
PO Box 400126
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4126

Please direct queries to jaar@virginia.edu.

The Return of Religion after “Religion”: Consequences for Theology and Religious Studies

Talk about “the return of religion” continues to be omnipresent in public conversation and within a variety of academic fields. Along with this talk about religion’s return has come a new attention to theology. Indeed, the centrality of theology is evident in the work of scholars who are not themselves theologians (the work of Agamben, Badiou, and Zizek on political theology; Eric Santner’s notion of “psychotheology,” the attention to theology in recent American political philosophy in William Connolly’s *Why I Am Not a Secularist Democracy and Tradition*).

However, public talk about the return of religion is taking place at precisely the same time as we see within the academic study of religion a sharp genealogical critique of the category “religion” from both theologians (Milbank) and scholars of religion (Asad, Balagangadhara, Dubuisson, King, Masuzawa). The category is now under fire as essentialist, provincially

western, imbricated in colonial projects and the like.

What are we to make of this juxtaposition? How are we to think about the prominence of public discourse about “religion” precisely when the category is under fire within the academic study of religion? *JAAR* and Jeffrey Stout’s invites proposals for a special issue that critically examines the return of religion after “religion” and its consequences for both theology and religious studies.

- What is the meaning of “the return of religion” for theology and religious studies more broadly?
- How might genealogical interrogations of the category “religion” by theologians and religious studies scholars reconfigure both fields?
- How do we think these two questions together?
- How will the growing prominence of religious voices in the public sphere reshape our ideas about theological reflection and the work of religious studies more broadly? What obligations fall to theologians and religious studies scholars in an era in which religion is an integral if contested aspect of public discourse?
- How do both scholarly communities take up this nexus of issues in a context marked by robust religious diversity?

Deadline for submission is Monday, **June 1, 2009**. Please submit papers to:

Journal of the American Academy of Religion
Department of Religious Studies
PO Box 400126
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4126

Please direct queries to jaar@virginia.edu.

CALL FOR AAR SERIES BOOK EDITOR

The Publications Committee seeks a book editor for the Teaching Religious Studies series, which is published in cooperation with Oxford University Press.

Further information on books published in this series can be found [here](#).

AAR series editors help set editorial policy, acquire manuscripts, and work with Oxford University Press in seeing manuscripts through to publication. Further information on the entire Oxford/AAR book series can be found [here](#). The required finalist interviews for the position will take place at the Publications Committee meeting, on Saturday, November 7, 2009 at the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal, Canada. Further information on the Publications Committee can be found [here](#).

The new editor will assume office on January 1, 2010, for a five-year (renewable once) term, and is expected to attend the two meetings of the Publications Committee: on the Saturday morning of the Annual Meeting and at the offices of Oxford University Press, in New York City, usually in mid-

March.

This is a volunteer position. All applicants must be members of the American Academy of Religion. Please e-mail inquires, nominations (self-nominations are also encouraged), and applications (a letter describing interests and qualifications, plus a current curriculum vita) by Word or PDF attachment to Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Publications Committee Chair, at cduggan@shawu.edu. The application deadline is **September 1, 2009**.

RECEIPTS FOR MEMBERSHIP AND ANNUAL MEETING

Did you know that you can generate a receipt for your membership dues from your membership account? Simply log in to [My Account](#) using your last name and membership ID number. Select “Your Renewal History” or “Your Giving History” to generate receipts for the desired year.

Annual Meeting Housing and Registration receipts are mailed to members along with their name badges, or generated immediately if you register onsite. To request a duplicate receipt, contact Experient at aarreg@experient-inc.com or call them at 1-800-575-7185 (+1-330-425-9330 if outside the United States or Canada).