



Fostering Excellence  
In the Study of Religion

## American Academy of Religion

## In This Issue

Colleagues:

Greetings from the Luce Center in Atlanta! We are finalizing plans for our Annual Meeting in Montréal, which is now only five weeks away. This month's e-Bulletin contains news about that event, as well as other important items. In particular, please be sure to vote in this year's elections as we choose our new Vice President and Student Director. Your participation in elections and the greater membership of the AAR is vital to the success of our organization.

Recently, the AAR and other partners cosponsored a successful scholarly videoconference session. You can view the full session for yourself and learn about other technological innovations that AAR is working on in this month's e-bulletin.

If you or a colleague is actively involved in the larger work of the Academy, feel free to submit nominations for the 2010 Excellence in Teaching award and the Martin E. Mary Public Understanding of Religion award.

For our student members, we are seeking a new editor for our student e-newsletter and want to call your attention to our improved student area of the AAR website.

Finally, please be sure to renew your 2010 membership if you have not already done so. Members who renew by October 15 will be entered into a drawing for complimentary housing at our 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia.

See you in Montréal next month!

Sincerely yours

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## ANNUAL MEETING NEWS

### 2009 Plenary Addresses and Panels

We are excited about the tremendous lineup of scholarly sessions on the program this year in Montréal. Some of the many highlights include:

- *Islam and Modernity*, Saturday, 4:00 PM–6:30 PM
- “*Our Home and Native Land*”: *Colonial Encounters and the History of Religion, Spirituality, and the Secular*, Saturday, 4:00 PM–6:30 PM
- Presidential Address: *Beyond Words and War: The Global Future of Religion*, Saturday, 8:00 PM–9:00 PM
- *Rethinking Secularism*, Sunday, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM
- Tariq Ramadan: *Contemporary Islam: The Meaning and the Need of a Radical Reform*, Sunday, 11:45 AM–12:45 AM
- *Marty Forum: James H. Cone*, Sunday, 1:00 PM–2:30 PM
- *Reasonable Accommodation in Québec: Reflections with Cochairs Charles Taylor and Gerard Bouchard*, Sunday, 3:00 PM–4:30 PM
- *Wither the “Death of God”: A Continuing Currency?*, Sunday, 3:00 PM–4:30 PM
- *Abdul Karim Soroush and Tariq Ramadan in Conversation*, Sunday, 5:00 PM–6:30 PM
- *Global Perspectives on Religious Studies*, Monday, 1:00 PM–3:30 PM

Register online to see these sessions and more!

### Name Badges

Name badges are in the mail for preregistrants. Pick up a badge holder, *Program Book* (in the tote bag), and your tote bag onsite and head directly to sessions and exhibits. If you have not received your badge before leaving for Montréal, you can pick one up at Registration, in the registration area of the Palais des Congrès. If you lost your name badge, a replacement costs USD\$5 at the Name Badges booth at Registration.

### Annual Meeting Job Center

Registration for the Annual Meeting Job Center closes October 12. The Job Center is an efficient way for employers and candidates to communicate and participate in job interviews. Those who register by the deadline will receive full benefits. Job Postings advertisers and Annual Meeting Job Center employers can now view the online CVs of Job Center candidates. The CVs are organized according to subspecialty. To view the CVs, [click here](#).

## **Visit the Exhibit Hall!**

A priority for anyone attending the AAR Annual Meeting is a visit to the Exhibit Hall! The Exhibit Hall features an array of the newest, latest, and greatest publications within the field. Publishers often offer deep discounts off list prices at the meeting, so check it out! An Exhibit Hall map is placed in each attendee's tote bag at the meeting so that you can find your favorite publisher. The Exhibit Hall is located behind the Registration area in the Palais des Congrès, Level 2, Room 210. A list of exhibiting companies can be found [here](#).

## **Getting to Montréal**

### By Plane

Most major airlines serve Montréal's Pierre Elliot Trudeau International Airport (YUL). It is the larger and closer airport. Some airlines also serve Montreal's Mirabel Airport (YMQ).

### By Train

Amtrak operates a scenic, nine-hour train service from New York's Penn Station that follows the Hudson River and Lake Champlain from rates as low as USD\$62.00 each way.

Via Rail offers service from all over Canada. From Toronto, six daily trains run from Toronto's downtown to Montréal's downtown in four to five hours. Four trains run daily between Montréal and Ottawa (a two-hour trip). There are three trains from Québec City (three hours each way) and one daily (except Tuesdays) from Atlantic Canada. The first-class Via Rail service is as low as USD\$79.00 each way and includes a hot meal, wine, and chocolate truffles.

### By Bus

Trailways and Greyhound have daily buses from major United States and Canadian cities, while Coach Canada serves most Canadian points and Buffalo, NY, to Montréal, via Toronto.

## **New TSA Regulations**

The United States Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has mandated that the name on your airline ticket and boarding pass must exactly match the name on your passport. Please check your tickets to make sure that these documents match exactly in order to avoid hassle and delays, and contact your air carrier in case you need to make a change.

## **Canadian Immigration**

It is necessary for those entering Canada to clear customs and immigration. Visitors from the United States and the European Union must present a passport in order to enter Canada. Please be prepared. Annual Meeting participants who are Mexican citizens now require a visa in order to enter Canada. Other non-U.S. and European Union citizens should inquire about possible visa requirements. Please see [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca) for details. Official letters of invitation to the Annual

Meeting to support visa applications are available. E-mail [annualmeeting@aarweb.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aarweb.org) with your name, address, and the full contact information of the consulate of your country.

### **Early Bird Registration and Housing**

Early Bird Registration and Housing for the 2010 AAR Annual Meeting opens on November 6! Register early to receive a discount on your 2010 registration and have first crack at Annual Meeting housing! Early Bird registration opens during the dates of the 2009 Annual Meeting, November 6–10, 2009. Early Bird registration is available online only. You can register for the Early Bird discount at any Internet accessible computer around the world. If you are attending the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal, come by the AAR booth (booth 501), the free Cyber Café in the Exhibit Hall, or the self-serve registration kiosks at Registration. Housing is also available! You must be a renewed 2010 AAR member to register for the 2010 meeting at the discounted member price.

### **2010 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Please take a moment to renew your AAR membership for 2010 today. Ensure your continued access to all your member benefits, including print and online access to *JAAR*, online *RSN* (first issue available online in March 2010), the online membership directory, and reduced registration rates at the Annual Meeting.

Advanced registration for the 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta begins November 7, 2009. Please note that you must be a 2010 member to take advantage of the early-bird member rate.

Current members who join by October 15, 2009, will be entered in a drawing to receive complimentary housing at the headquarters hotel at the 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Renew your membership for calendar year 2010 now at [www.aarweb.org/Members/Dues](http://www.aarweb.org/Members/Dues).

### **AAR ELECTIONS**

We are using Survey Monkey for a variety of member communications, including this year's elections ballot. By now, you should have received notice of the electronic ballot for the 2009 AAR elections. If you have opted out of receiving Survey Monkey in the past and did not receive the elections ballot via email, please contact our office and we will mail a ballot to you. Contact Stephanie Gray at [sgray@aarweb.org](mailto:sgray@aarweb.org) for a paper ballot. This is a wonderful opportunity to influence the governance of the AAR, so please cast your vote for the candidates. Elections are open until October 28, 2009.

### **TECHNOLOGY AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION**

One element of the Academy's Long Range Plan has to do with the

use of Technology in Scholarly Communication. Our Board and our Executive Staff are currently working on this goal at three levels: We have successfully run our first scholarly video conference; we have adopted a software package to enable small group videoconferences; and we are working on the development of a scholarly networking tool that will encourage communication between our members and members of other scholarly societies. Here is a bit about each project:

On May 22, 2009, the AAR sponsored a scholarly video conference entitled “New Scientific Approaches to the Study of Religious Experience.” Partners to the conference were from Emory’s Center for Mind, Brain, and Culture, Emory’s Department of Religion, and the Centre for Anthropology and Mind at the University of Oxford. Panelists included Bob McCauley, John Dunne, and Dianne Stewart of Emory University, and Harvey Whitehouse, Emma Cohen, and Justin Barrett of Oxford University. By all accounts the conference was a success, but you can judge for yourselves. The conference was also recorded and we have posted it in its entirety here:

<http://vimeo.com/album/101624>

We hope to host more such gatherings and will be working with our Annual Meeting Program Unit Chairs to explore ways they might be able to hold similar conferences outside of the regular Annual Meeting cycle.

After extensive testing of several software packages, our Executive Staff has begun to use a desktop videoconferencing program called WebEx. It allows for meetings of several people with full audio and video, and a pane that allows participants to edit a text or view a presentation at the same time. We have begun using the package for our own meetings and several AAR Committees have begun experimenting with it as well. We hope to deploy WebEx more and more frequently as we seek to behave responsibly with regard to sustainability issues.

Finally, under the leadership of Steve Herrick, the AAR has begun working with funding agencies and software development organizations to build and deploy a software package that would enable scholarly networking, something of a parallel to social networking software. Our Board has seen a prototype of what we have in mind – we called the first iteration “Biosphere” — and we are now in serious conversations with funders and software development organizations. More to come of this exciting front, and soon!

### **AAR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD**

The Committee on Teaching and Learning seeks nominations for the AAR Excellence in Teaching Award. Nominations of winners of campus awards, or any other awards, are encouraged. Procedures for the nomination process are outlined on the AAR website at [www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/teaching\\_awards](http://www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/teaching_awards).

## **MARTIN E. MARTY PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGION AWARD**

To nominate someone for the AAR's Martin E. Marty Award, which recognizes extraordinary contributions to the public understanding of religion by those whose work speaks to the public as well as to scholars, please [click here](#). The deadline for nominations is January 25, 2010.

## **IMPROVED STUDENT PAGES ON FACEBOOK**

The Graduate Student Committee is proud to introduce and announce new and improved “student pages” on the AAR website.

Want to know why you should join the AAR as a student? Go to the “student pages.”

Got a question about how to get involved in AAR? The answer can be found on the “student pages.”

Need information about getting funding, publishing, and/or getting hired? Peruse the “student pages!”

Curious to know how you can access this information? Go to [www.aarweb.org](http://www.aarweb.org), click on the “Members” link, hit the “Students” tab, and navigate to the informational page that you want.

The Graduate Student Committee hopes you find the pages informative and useful. We are excited about this venture geared towards meeting the needs of our student population and are open to your ideas, questions, and comments!

## **SEEKING APPLICATIONS FOR THE *SPEAKING OF STUDENTS* EDITOR POSITION**

The AAR Student Director, Nichole R. Phillips, seeks an editor for the *Speaking of Students* (*S.O.S.*) graduate student e-newsletter. The *Speaking of Students* editor will solicit articles for the January, April, July, and October issues of *S.O.S* based on established submission guidelines. The editor will work closely with the Student Director, Graduate Student Committee Chair, and the AAR Staff Liaison to the Graduate Student Committee. The editor will also submit an annual status report to the Student Director.

The term of service is January 1, 2010, to December 31, 2011. Qualifications include: 1) Current student membership in the AAR for at least one calendar year prior to applying; 2) Previous editing experience; and 3) Current enrollment in a PhD program.

To apply for this position, please send a brief statement of interest with biographical sketch and current CV to Nichole R. Phillips at [phillipsnr@gmail.com](mailto:phillipsnr@gmail.com). All applications must be received by Monday, November 16, 2009, CST. The selection announcement will be made

on Tuesday, December 1, 2009.

## **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:  
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