



## 2021 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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# General Call for Proposals Instructions

## Deadline

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The deadline for the Call for Proposals is **Monday, March 1, 2021, 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.**

## Meeting Location

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The 2021 AAR and SBL Annual Meetings will be held November 20-23, in San Antonio, TX. Registration and the Exhibit Hall will be located in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Academic sessions will be held in the Convention Center, Hyatt Regency, Grand Hyatt, Marriott Riverwalk, Marriott River Center, and Hilton Palacio Del Rio. Registration and housing for the Annual Meeting will open in the spring.

## Questions about the Call

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The work of the Program Unit is coordinated by the Chair(s) and a Steering Committee who design the sessions and make the decisions about which proposals will eventually be on the program. Each proposal is carefully refereed, usually in an anonymous procedure (i.e., without the name of the proposer being provided to the referees). All proposals, abstracts, and completed participant information (as well as any questions you may have) should be sent to the individual(s) named in the Call; this occurs automatically in the INSPIRE System. The deadline for proposal submission is **5:00 PM EST, Monday, March 1.**

Please inquire with the appropriate Program Unit Chair(s) about the amount of time granted for your presentation and by what date the respondent (if any) must receive your completed paper.

## Guidelines for Submitting Proposals

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- Step 1: Find a topic in the general [Call for Proposals](#) or Call of a specific Program Unit that interests you.
- Step 2: Determine which type of proposal you wish to submit.
  - Paper proposal – A paper written by you (and possibly a coauthor) that you will present in response to a theme within a Program Unit's Call.

- Papers session proposal – A proposal of a complete session of different papers on a theme, complete with its own description, abstract, a presider, paper presentations, and (optionally) a respondent. Presenters in a papers session must submit their proposals to the papers session organizer, who in turn is responsible for inputting them into the INSPIRE System.
  - Roundtable session proposal – A proposal of a complete session, including a presider, list of panelists, and (optionally) a respondent; all of whom will speak (ex tempore) on a common theme.
- Step 3: Write your 7,500 character (including spaces) proposal and 1200-character (including spaces) abstract. Paper sessions require a separate 7,500 character proposal and 1200-character abstract for each paper in the session. The abstracts will be listed in the Online Program Book.
  - Step 4: Submit your proposal via the method requested by the Program Unit no later than **Monday, March 1**. Most Program Units have elected to use the online INSPIRE system only. Carefully note any audiovisual equipment you require before you submit your proposal.
- INSPIRE: Submit your 7,500 character (including spaces) proposal and 1200-character (including spaces) abstract via the INSPIRE system. NB: Do not place your name or other identifying remarks in the body of the proposal field or abstract field in INSPIRE; this may endanger the anonymous review process of the Unit and acceptance of your proposal may be jeopardized. Your name and contact information is sent automatically with the proposal. For help using the INSPIRE system, please consult the [INSPIRE User Manual](#) or if you still require assistance, email [support@aarweb.org](mailto:support@aarweb.org).
  - E-mail: Submit your 7,500 character (including spaces) proposal and 1200-character (including spaces) abstract within the BODY of ONE single e-mail to the contacts listed in the Program Unit's call (usually the Chairs). Attach the [Participant Form for E-mail Submission](#). Please be sure you use the exact same title on the Participant Form for E-mail Submission as you do on the e-mailed proposal. Proposals received without the participant forms will be disqualified. Participant forms received without proposals or abstracts will also be disqualified. If you are requested by the Program Unit to submit a copy to both co-Chairs or Steering Committee members, follow the instructions listed. If no one person is specified, send your complete proposal to either one of the co-Chairs.
  - E-mail with Attachments: Submit your 7,500 character (including spaces) proposal and 1200-character (including spaces) abstract, and Participant Form as attachments in one single e-mail to the contacts listed in the Program Unit's call (usually the Chairs). Attach the [Participant Form for E-mail Submission](#). Be sure you use the exact same title on the Participant Form for E-mail Submission as you do on the attached proposal you e-mail. Proposals received without the participant forms will be disqualified. Participant forms received without proposals or abstracts will also be disqualified.

- Step 5: Notification of your proposal's acceptance status for the Annual Meeting program will be sent by April 1, 2021.

## Participation Requirements at the Annual Meeting

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Membership is not required to submit a proposal in response to the Call for Proposals for 2021. However, all participants accepted to the program must be current AAR members and registered for the Annual Meeting by June 30, 2021. Beginning in 2022, current membership WILL be required for proposal submission.

Participants may appear no more than two times in any capacity (e.g., paper presenter, panelist, presider, or respondent). The only exception is a business meeting presider. A person can have only one role in a session. You cannot preside and present a paper in the same session.

People can submit no more than two proposals in response to the Call for Proposals. This includes submitting the same proposal to two separate Units or two different proposals to two different Units.

## Special Sessions

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A limited number of special sessions are approved by the Program Committee each year. These are intended to be experimental, creative, or timely sessions that address an area of interest that does not naturally fall within the purview of one or more existing Program Units OR that address a current issue/event of interest to multiple AAR constituencies. The Program Committee occasionally approves special sessions for sessions that would be one-time only or special to the year or location. Under exceptional circumstances, special sessions may also be proposed to address a pressing issue that arises after the proposal deadline.

Guidelines for special sessions:

- Special sessions are accepted through INSPIRE only.
- Special session proposals must provide a rationale based on the criteria above.
- Special sessions must use one of the prearranged session proposal formats (papers session or roundtable).
- Make sure the special 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 both as a special session and also to a program unit, it will be eliminated from consideration as a special session.
- The Program Committee evaluates all Special Session proposals. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by April 1, 2021.

## Exploratory Sessions

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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 INSPIRE system, and must be submitted before March 1, 2021. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by April 1, 2021.

In order to establish a new program unit, the unit proposers must normally be approved by the Program Committee to hold an exploratory session two years in a row. After the second exploratory session, the unit proposers may submit their proposal for a new unit, which the Program Committee can approve, deny, or – in very rare circumstances – return for revision and resubmission after a third, final exploratory session.

## Annual Meeting Schedule

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Saturday – Monday

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (2 hours)

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM <Lunch break and Plenary Addresses>

12:30 PM – 2:30 PM (2 hours)

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM (90 minutes)

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM (90 minutes)

Tuesday morning

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM (2 hours)

The AAR encourages creative and innovative proposals for the shorter sessions. Some possibilities include: restricting a panel to two or three thirty-minute papers followed by discussion; posting papers in advance to focus on discussion rather than presentation; topical panel discussions; discussion of a book or film; a panel on teaching in the field; or workshop-style sessions. The ninety-minute format is perfect for hosting specialized conversations on an aspect of the field or "teaching" a topic to the audience.

## Audiovisual Requests

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The AAR recognizes the importance of using digital equipment during presentations. A limited number of meeting rooms are supplied with LCD projectors for connecting to a personal laptop or tablet. Additionally, some rooms will have the capacity to amplify audio from a presenter's device. AAR encourages participants to bring or share a personal or departmental laptop or tablet to run any PowerPoint, CD, or DVD presentation.

Audiovisual equipment rental costs have increased dramatically at the Annual Meeting. Recognizing that the majority of Annual Meeting audiovisual presentations involve PowerPoint or computer presentations, the AAR chose to support this trend by furnishing such equipment. A number of rooms will be set with LCD projectors for plug in to a participant's personal laptop. AAR does not provide computers. We encourage participants to bring their personal or departmental laptops or communicate with members of the same session in order to share computer use.

Participants must submit a request for equipment with their proposal. If accepted, the request is forwarded to the AAR office and the session will be scheduled in an AV room set. AV request must be received by the April 1 session submission deadline. The AAR office will make every effort to honor the AV requests received at the time of the proposal.

Free wifi access will be available in some properties, but for bandwidth-intensive applications, please request "Wired Internet for Streaming Video". In order to ensure quality, video presentations should be downloaded to a native device and not streamed over the internet when possible.

To check your audio-visual request at this year's Annual Meeting, log into your account in INSPIRE and view your session information.

## Questions about the Annual Meeting

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Concerns of a general nature may be sent to [annualmeeting@aarweb.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aarweb.org).

## African Diaspora Religions Unit

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### Call Text:

Honoring the 50th Anniversary of Robert Farris Thompson's *Black Gods and Kings* & the 10th Anniversary of *Aesthetic of the Cool: The Black Body as Medium and Archive*

More than fifty years ago Robert Farris Thompson in reference to, and in conversation with Melville Herskovits' work, began writing and researching embodied African and African Diaspora sacred practices and traditions. Thompson looked first to the body as a medium and archive of indigenous knowledge. He raised questions of ecstatic possession, and the provocative break in time, consciousness, and rhythm across our expressive cultural practices fostering the power to make things happen. Examining Thompson's contributions to the field, this session calls for a reflection on our embodied sacred-cultural practices, as well as critical dialogue with Thompson, and, between Thompson and Herskovits. Artistic and embodied critical reflections are welcome and even encouraged.

Breath, Spirit, and the Soul: African Diaspora Religion, Popular Culture and Social Justice in the Public Sphere

In 2014 Eric Garner, and again in 2020 George Floyd pleaded "I can't breathe" to the police officers who extinguished their lives. These acts of state sponsored violence have galvanized people to take to the streets in the midst of the ongoing pandemics of systemic racism, environmental destruction, and COVID-19. This has brought to the fore a politics of breath, breathing, and the spirit. The righteous outcry that "Black lives matter," is quite apparent when considering the parallels between: the death of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples at the hands of the police, the impact of pollution in geographies where predominantly marginalized communities reside, and the disproportionate death of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples to COVID-19. Breath, breathing, and the spirit are deeply political as well as spiritual. Patrisse Cullors, the co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement states that the Black Lives Matter movement is, "a spiritual movement...Part of our calling as people who do this work for Black lives is to lift our people up, both in their living, but also in their death.... It is literally almost resurrecting a spirit so they can work through us to get the work that we need to get done" (Molina, Religion News Service, June 15, 2020). In this session, we invite presentations and/or embodied engagements that examine how Africana religious cultures, spiritual systems and practices, artistic movements, and popular cultural forms uplift, re-member, and resurrect Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples as breath, soul, and "spirit," what W.E.B. Du Bois terms the "souls of Black folk" (1961) and Charles H. Long reframes as "soul stuff" (2018, pp. 279-280), the life-giving force of our modern world. From Second Line funerary parades, to Ring Shouts, Xiré circle processions, or the various interpretations of Janelle Monáe's anthem, "Hell You Talmbout", we engage with spirit through our bodies. We thus also invite presentations and embodied

experiences that explore how Africana religious traditions' understandings of breath, breathing, and the "spirit" and their popular cultural forms influence present-day social and environmental justice movements.

#### Mission Statement:

Our unit explores broad geographies, histories, and cultures of people of African descent and the way they shape the religious landscape, not only in the Caribbean and the Americas, but also in Europe and Asia. We define "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 which 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE, E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)  
Please note we would prefer INSPIRE as the primary method of submission.

#### Chairs:

- Scott Alves Barton, New York University  
scott.barton@nyu.edu
- Elana Jefferson-Tatum, Tufts University  
elana.jefferson\_tatum@tufts.edu

## African Religions Unit

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### Call Text:

Our Unit encourages critical inquiry about religions originating and/or practiced in Africa. 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 2021 Annual Meeting, we particularly invite papers as well as panel proposals that respond to the following themes relevant to any region of the African continent and its diverse religious cultures:

#### Jacob Olupona's Contribution to the Study of African Religions

Few people have done more to enrich our understanding of African religions than Jacob Olupona. Spanning and incorporating perspectives from African and African diasporic religious studies, phenomenology, history of religions, and ethnography, among others, his body of work, while focusing greatly on indigenous religious traditions, has also contributed to our understandings of Christianity and Islam as practiced by Africans on the continent and in the diaspora. We invite papers that examine the impact and legacy of his work on the study of religion in Africa and the diaspora. We are particularly interested in papers that deal with both theoretical and materialist challenges to and opportunities for the study of African religions, defined broadly. These include but are not limited to emic and etic perspectives, phenomenology, hermeneutics, the public sphere, and modernity.

#### Faith in a Time of COVID-19: Religion & Public Health Measures

This panel considers religious communities' responses to public health measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions on religious gatherings, mask wearing, and vaccine compliance. With attention to the history of medical racism and religious persecution, papers may also explore various communities' experience of health disparities and access to healthcare. We especially welcome proposals addressing these issues from African and other indigenous religious perspectives. (For a possible co-sponsored session with the African Religions Unit, the Bioethics Unit, the Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, and the Religions, Medicine and Healing Unit)

#### All Black Lives Matter: African Religions, Black Spiritualities and the Indigenization of Movements Against Global Anti-Blackness

Protests against the systematic killing of African American women, men and children, which took embodied and virtual forms in 2020, were not limited to the United States, but extended to Europe and Africa in a show of transnational solidarity. In the midst of a pandemic that had already claimed millions of lives by June 2020 worldwide, pain and hope intertwined as people from all walks of life took to the streets of their respective cities or their social media newsfeeds, to expose systemic racism, police brutality, and the vestiges of colonialism, while advocating for social change.

On June 15, 2020, Fon priests, priestesses, and diviners in Benin undertook a revenge ritual, invoking Gu Gbadagly as the deity is known in Fon, or Ogun (in Yorùbá), not only to avenge the murder of George Floyd, but to empower Floyd to rise in the immaterial world and to mete out justice on his own behalf. The revenge ritual was significant not only for its viral impact on social media platforms, but for its articulation of the stake that African Religions and African Diaspora Religions have and must have in the flourishing of African and African descended people worldwide.

Ritual technologies are outward performances of ontological proclamations affirming Blackness as a communal connector of Africa and the African diaspora. The revenge ritual clearly asserts an understated claim that this session seeks to amplify: a threat to Blackness somewhere is a threat to Blackness everywhere. This call invites papers at the intersections of religion and ritual, justice, and transnational solidarity. Papers that engage, interrogate, and explore the cross-section of indigenous interventions, interruptions, and subversions of anti-Blackness, and the particular role that religion and Black spirituality play in these processes are particularly salient for the theme of this session.

#### Mission Statement:

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

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

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- David Amponsah, University of Pennsylvania  
amda@sas.upenn.edu
- Adriaan Van Klinken, University of Leeds  
a.vanklinken@leeds.ac.uk

## Afro-American Religious History Unit

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Call Text:

The Afro-American Religious History Unit invites proposals that explore the religiosity of African-descended people within the geographical and geo-cultural boundaries of the United States. For our 2021 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, we are especially interested in proposals that engage one or more of the following topics:

Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the publication of Carter G. Woodson's *The History of the Negro Church*, specifically:

- New theories and methods in the study of African American Christianity;
- Reconceptualizations of the "Black Church" paradigm;
- The historiographical, sociological, or anthropological legacy of Woodson's publication.

For a co-sponsorship with the Eastern Orthodox Studies unit, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the African Orthodox Church, specifically:

- The relationship between the African Orthodox Church, and Civil Rights and Black nationalist organizations, like the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA);
- The place of the African Orthodox Church amid the Black Protestant religious landscape and/or other Orthodox churches in the United States;
- The church's Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Canadian, and African-American roots and transnational concepts of Blackness;
- Comparisons with historical and existing Orthodox Christian communities in Africa, and/or Black participation in Orthodox Christian Churches in America.

Rethorizations of the geographical and cultural boundaries of African American Religion in relationship to the concept of Borderlands, specifically:

- Afro-Spanish, Afro-Indigenous, and other "hybrid" religiosities;
- Concepts of space, the embodiment of space, and boundaries in African-American religion;
- Black religion among asylum seekers and within immigrant communities in America/The impact of immigration upon enactments and definitions of African American religion.

African-American Religion and Politics, broadly configured, particularly:

- Historical topics that elucidate contemporary political landscapes and futures, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on Black communities;
- Cultural hybridity, Black women's political organizing, and other reflections upon Vice President Kamala Harris's historic election;
- State-sponsored and other forms of organized violence directed at the African-American religious community, in recognition of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tulsa Greenwood massacre;
- Analyses of broad concepts of power, resistance, and protest in electoral politics, as well as contemporary and historical movements like abolition, emigration and colonization, Black Lives Matter, Prison Abolition, and Moral Mondays.

Redressing the historiographical dearth of LGBTQI+ African American religious histories, specifically:

- The theoretical possibilities of queering African American religion;
- The historical presence of gender nonconformity, gender fluidity, and a spectrum of sexualities physically and conceptually within Black religious communities;
- The methodological and theoretical limitations of heteronormativity and gender normativity.

Black Religion and the Public Humanities, specifically:

- Reflections on Black religions broadly construed and the Academy;
- Representations of the intersections of race and religion in popular culture, cultural memory, and other "publics," as well as approaches to public engagement within and outside of religious communities.

Intellectual Trajectories in the Study of African American Religion: Highlighting Graduate Student Work:

- Potential presenters should create proposals for five to seven minute presentations

We also invite creative proposals that are attentive to alternative methods of presenting, including but not limited to multimedia presentations, interviews, flash/micro talks, and facilitated discussions.

Mission Statement:

The purpose of this Unit is to recover the sources and histories related to the religious experiences of African-descended people in the United States; challenge, nuance, and expand theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of African-American religions; and create forums for critical, creative, and collaborative engagement with new scholarship in the field. The Unit is committed to the historical investigation of the diversity of U.S. African-Americans' religious experiences across chronological periods.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Tobin Shearer, University of Montana  
tobin.shearar@umontana.edu
- Alexis S. Wells-Oghoghomeh, Vanderbilt University  
alexis.s.wells@vanderbilt.edu

## Animals and Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

This Unit addresses the study of animals and religion and seeks to engage scholars of religion with the emergent field of animal studies. We welcome theoretically informed paper/panel proposals on all topics related to these themes. We value papers that attend to real animals alongside theoretical constructs, imagery, or representations pertaining to them, and papers that attend to intersectionality with key issues such as race, gender, sexuality, and disability.

In addition to such proposals, the Animals and Religion Unit is interested in organizing sessions around the following topics, with an eye toward the 2021 Annual Meeting's presidential theme: "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures."

- Religion and religious language have been prominent in responses to COVID-19: some are asked to sacrifice in the work to save others, invocations of the common good and freedom have been used to excoriate leaders and citizens alike. Somewhat less visibly, animals' lives have been caught up in the same religious and quasi-religious discourses: wet markets have been vilified with racist and classist ideas, while simultaneously, slaughterhouse workers in the industrialized food chain have been exposed to danger because their work is deemed "essential." 17 million mink have been culled in Denmark and countless animals have been utilized in vaccine development and production. We welcome proposals analyzing and addressing such dynamics.
- Similarly, as a zoonotic disease that has interrupted human political and economic systems, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically exposed the porosity of human-animal boundaries. We welcome proposals addressing animal-human relationships at the microscopic scale: tiny animals, animacy, and the boundaries between matter and life.
- Drawing on the presidential theme for the meeting, we welcome proposals that address the lives of animals as they intersect with "religion, poverty, and inequality." In what ways are poverty, homelessness, and inequality helpful concepts for analyzing animals and animal-human relationships? How does racialized capitalism prey upon animals' lives and play out through constructions of animality?
- Finally, as mentioned above, we welcome paper proposals and proposals for full panels that advance scholarship in the area of Animals and Religion.

### Mission Statement:

The purpose of this Unit is to advance scholarship by providing a forum for scholars whose work addresses 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

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Barbara Ambros, University of North Carolina  
bambros@email.unc.edu
- Eric Meyer, Carroll College  
ericdaryl.meyer@gmail.com

## Anthropology of Religion Unit

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Call Text:

We invite proposals from the full range of ethnographic theories and methods exploring diverse traditions, regions, topics, periods, and standpoints from across the disciplines of Anthropology and Religious Studies.

The steering committee has identified the following areas to be of particular interest for individual and panel submissions for the 2021 meetings:

Religion & (Dis)Connected Lives. How have religious communities experienced, managed, struggled with, and responded to forms of social disruption and isolation, both before the COVID-19 pandemic and during?

Borders, Boundaries, and Borderlands in Middle Eastern Christianity. The Anthropology of Religion unit, in collaboration with the Middle Eastern Christianity unit, is soliciting papers addressing the theme of borders, boundaries, and borderlands. Papers should consider contestations of space and religiosity related to the nation-state or other spaces variously conceived, including the creation or contestation of sacred space in diaspora settings and the use of religious art and music to mark communal boundaries. Priority will be given to papers addressing this theme from an anthropological perspective.

Religion under Pandemics: Practices, Memories, and Affects (Co-sponsored by the Anthropology of Religion, Religion, Memory, and History, and Body and Religion units.) Our units invite proposals that investigate how pandemics as well as societies' attempts to manage or mitigate their impact (e.g. quarantines, ways of treating the afflicted, memorializing the dead, etc.) intersect with people's religious lives, narratives about the past or sites of memory, and embodied experiences by foreclosing certain established practices as well as by opening up new spaces for devotional experimentation and meaning-making. We are especially interested in papers that place contemporary ethnographic work on COVID-19 in conversation with historical cases (and vice-versa), and/or which foreground how different methodological and theoretical approaches might help us make better sense of the roles religion plays under the extraordinary social circumstances of a pandemic.

Social Lives of Religious Language. We welcome proposals that engage with ethnographic, archival, and/or discourse analyses of verbal art and/or the materiality of language in religious life. We also welcome proposals that explore linguistic and metapragmatic dynamics of (mis)translation, inclusion and exclusion.

Religion & the Arts. Critical explorations of religious artistry and processes of cultural production at the intersection of religion, art, and public life.

Further, we encourage panel proposals that use creative and alternative formats that elevate critical dialogue and engage multiple senses, for example:

**Flash Formats.** An increased number of presenters are allotted ~5 minutes, followed by a robust, guided discussion.

**Sensory Props.** Presenters engage with a material form that bears fieldwork significance, such as physical objects, visual images, and/or sound recordings.

**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:

<https://aarlists.org/>

**Method of Submission:**

INSPIRE

**Chairs:**

- James Bielo, Miami University  
bielojs@miamioh.edu
- Jennifer A. Selby, Memorial University of Newfoundland  
jselby@mun.ca

## Arts Series

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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 normally sponsor arts installations or performances at the Annual Meeting. However, due to constraints on the financial and human resources necessary to produce these events, we will not be offering the Arts Series this year. The AAR will publicize information about local San Antonio arts exhibits and performances in its promotional material, so please email us at [annualmeeting@aarweb.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aarweb.org) with any information you would like to share.

## Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

This year the Arts, Literature and Religion Unit solicits proposals for the following topics, but also welcomes proposals for any papers or preferably pre-formed panels related to any aspect of Arts, Literature and Religion. We are hoping for a rich slate of panels that display a wide range of religious expression, using varied media (including the performing arts) that span geographical locales and the premodern, modern, and contemporary periods. The ALR is also committed to diversity, and we want to encourage potential presenters and panel organizers to propose topics that will attract a wide audience and that are explicitly and deliberately inclusive of racial and ethnic identities, gender identities and sexual orientations, socio-economic / class status, varied types of academic appointments (e.g. graduate students, contingent faculty, early, mid-, late-career professors, international colleagues, and independent scholars) at a variety of institutional types. The presidential theme this year is "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures" and we welcome proposals on this topic in addition to any and all proposals.

For 2021, Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit will hold three deferred sessions from 2020:

- 1) Whose Rooster: A Roundtable on Thoreau, Melville, and Transcendentalist Environmental Politics
- 2) Performing Race, Religion and the Secular
- 3) Visions of the End: Wastelands, Doomsdays, and Ecological Collapse in Art and Literature

### Call For Papers:

- 1) The Literature of Ted Chiang – for a potential co-sponsored panel with the Science Fiction and Religion Unit and Religion and Popular Culture. We solicit proposals that engage the work of Ted Chiang in tandem with theories or tropes of religion and/or science fiction. We are receptive to a wide range of critical approaches that engage any of Chiang's novels, short stories or collections
- 2) Theology, Literature, and the Arts: Proposals may include but are not limited to: Literary and artistic approaches to theological works, theological analysis of literary texts and art, rituals and art, music and theology. For potential co-sponsorship with the Comparative Theology Unit. Contact: Gloria Maité Hernández [ghernandez@wcupa.edu](mailto:ghernandez@wcupa.edu)
- 3) Women and Revelation in India, China, and Tibet

We would like to organize a panel that explores the central role of narrative (especially hagiography) in the process of building a community, and the key role of women (divine, human, and everything in between) play in the writing, transmission, and alteration of revelatory literature. The focus will be on the historical literature of China, India, and Tibet, and compare the shared modes of textual production in these regions. Please contact Jue Liang ([liangj@denison.edu](mailto:liangj@denison.edu)) or Jonathan Pettit ([jeep@hawaii.edu](mailto:jeep@hawaii.edu)) if you are interested in contributing or have any questions. (Possible co-sponsorship with

Comparative Studies in Religion Unit, Himalayan and Tibetan Religions Unit, and Women and Religion Unit.)

4) Indigenous women's literature as ceremony / as medicine. Contact: Ken Derry [ken.derry@utoronto.ca](mailto:ken.derry@utoronto.ca)

5) Religious Exile in Arts and Literature (accepting new and re-submission of 2020 proposals)

6) Religious Art and Literature in post-Communist countries (accepting new and re-submission of 2020 proposals)

7) Religion in the literature of plague and pandemic

8) Religious representations of poverty in art and literature (to fit the 2021 theme)

9) Open Call: Contact Pamela Winfield [pwinfield@elon.edu](mailto:pwinfield@elon.edu)

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Gloria Maité Hernández, West Chester University  
[ghernandez@wcupa.edu](mailto:ghernandez@wcupa.edu)
- Pamela D. Winfield, Elon University  
[pwinfield@elon.edu](mailto:pwinfield@elon.edu)

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

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Call Text:

Diversity is a core value of the ANARCS unit. For this reason, we encourage organizers of pre-formed panels to invite participants that are diverse in regard to ethnicity, religion, gender, and professional status. In addition, we especially welcome proposals that focus on communities that have been historically underrepresented, including Southeast Asian, South Asian, Pacific Islander, and non-Christian communities.

For 2021, the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit invites papers that address the following themes:

### 1) Asian American and Pacific Islander Religion in Art and Popular Culture

The Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit invites proposals on Asian American and Pacific Islander Religions in Art and Popular Culture, including but not limited to fashion, fiction, television, movies, music, social media, video games and food culture. We especially welcome paper proposals that engage Jane Iwamura's work, *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture* (OUP, 2011), which celebrates the tenth anniversary of its publication in 2021. For instance, ten years later, what new historical and theoretical directions does Iwamura's work compel us to investigate, with regard to the category of religion, Orientalism and popular culture? How has ubiquitous use of social media and apps, in the hyperconnected twenty-first century, expanded our understanding of what Iwamura calls the "Oriental Monk"?

### 2) Asian American and Pacific Islander Religious Life During Times of Crisis

The Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit invites proposals on Asian American Pacific Islander Religions During Times of Crisis, including but not limited to democracy and political polarization; poverty, class and economic inequality; public health and electoral politics; racial injustice, protest and coalition building; gender, sexuality and reproductive politics; climate change and science. We welcome interdisciplinary approaches—historical and/or close readings of textual, digital, material and visual culture, ethnographic and sociological analyses of communities as well as theological, philosophical and ethical critiques—that shed new light on the relationship between crisis, Asian American and Pacific Islander life, religions and the religious. Any other topic related to Asian American and Pacific Islander religions.

In addition, we invite submissions in response to the following co-sponsored calls:

Reformed Theology and History Unit and Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit

Co-Sponsored Session

Reformed Tradition and Ecclesial Life in Asian America

RTHU and ANARCS invite proposals for papers that examine the Reformed tradition and ecclesial life focusing on the Asian North American context. Interdisciplinary papers engaging with current or historical issues in theology, immigration, race and politics,

gender, sex and sexuality, transnational relations with diasporic communities, theological formation of church leaders, and tensions with and receptions of Reformed theologians and models of Reformed faith would all be suitable topics for inquiry. Historical, theological, intercultural, missiological, sociological, ethnographic, postcolonial, and other methodological approaches are welcome, especially constructive retrievals, and imaginings. We especially welcome proposals that focus on communities that have been historically underrepresented with the Asian North American community, including Southeast Asian, South Asian, and Pacific Islander, and communities, as well as interracial dynamics with other BIPOC communities.

#### Sikh Studies Unit and Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit Co-Sponsored Session

##### Sikhs and Sikhism in North America

The Sikh Studies Unit and the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit invite papers on Sikhs and Sikhism in North America. While proposals must include a North American component, we welcome proposals that explore Sikh experience across geographical boundaries, and encourage proposals from a wide range of methodological and disciplinary approaches. In their consideration of the development and transformation of Sikhism in North American diasporic contexts, proposals may address a variety of themes, including gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, space, politics, activism, literature, arts, education and practices. How has transnationalism shaped the production of Sikh beliefs, practices, and institutions or conceptions of Sikhism in North America? How do Sikhs and Sikhism engage with liberal ideologies (e.g. secularism) or public policies (e.g. multiculturalism) in the North American diaspora? In what ways has Sikh self-understanding and engagement been informed by their North American contexts?

#### Chinese Christianities Unit and Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit Co-Sponsored Session

##### Race, Religion, and the “China Virus”

The Chinese Christianities Unit and the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit invite papers on the themes of health, healing, and religion that take into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other issues that have affected both Asian American and global Sinophone communities, such as SARS, MSG Syndrome, and Mad Cow Disease. For instance, how are local, transnational and global communities interconnected amid the resurgence of anti-Asian racism in the age of COVID-19? While anti-Chinese sentiment is a historical phenomenon, what new connections do we see between religion, politics, race, health, healing and medicine, with the use of slurs such as “China virus” and digital recordings of hate crimes in the social media age? We welcome paper proposals that include a variety of religions and traditions as well as analyses of a range of anti-Asian, intra-Asian and interracial dynamics. We welcome engagement with “democratic” versus “totalitarian” approaches to pandemic life as well as examination of medical practices ranging from traditional Chinese medicine to charismatic healing.

#### 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Helen Jin Kim, Emory University  
helenjkin@emory.edu
- SueJeanne Koh, University of California, Irvine  
sj.koh@uci.edu

## Augustine and Augustinianisms Unit

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### Call Text:

The Augustine and Augustinianism program unit is not accepting new proposals this year because the program has already been established. The established sessions include:

- Augustine and Christian Theologies of Jewish Protections

In her *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism*, Paula Fredriksen traced the ways that Augustine came to construct a Christian theology of Judaism, one that eventually preserved a social space for Jews as a religious minority in the post-Roman West. This theology contrasted in telling ways from Augustine's principled opposition to dissident Christians and to traditional Mediterranean cult. Papers are, first of all, invited from all disciplines employing a wide range of methodologies to examine what resources are available either in Augustine or his later interpreters to ensure Jewish flourishing. Papers are also welcomed on the limits and shortcomings of the Augustinian tradition in this regard and about times in which his theological reasoning failed to persuade or protect. Paula Fredriksen will respond to accepted papers and reflect upon her work a decade after its appearance.

- James K. A. Smith on Augustine in the 21st Century

Co-Sponsored Session with SBL Contextualizing North African Christianity Unit. An interview with James K. A. Smith on the questions raised by his bestselling *On the Road with Saint Augustine: A Real-World Spirituality for Restless Hearts* (Brazos, 2019). Smith takes Augustine as his guide to problems that perplexed Augustine and still challenge us such as ambition, sex, friendship, faith, freedom, justice, parenting, and death. While explaining his own journey in the footsteps of Augustine, Smith will also explore further how others may do the same in our time. Papers are not invited for this session.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Matthew Drever, University of Tulsa  
matthew-drever@utulsa.edu
- Paul R. Kolbet, Yale University  
kolbet@aya.yale.edu

## Baha'i Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

The Baha'i Studies Unit invites submissions that consider the nature and role of education in social transformation at the local, national, or global level in light of the 2021 Annual Conference Theme of "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures." Education is a primary site within which the future is imagined and formed. Curricula are drafted to accomplish certain things in the world, but within the temporal horizon of years or decades. How have post-secular or religious educational modalities attempted to craft the future in ways that reiterate or transform social and economic inequality in the present? We are particularly interested in proposals that shed new understandings, arising from theory and practice, on questions of the purpose of education; the nature of social transformation required for human flourishing; the roles of actors in educational processes; the relationships between faith and reason, personal and collective transformation, and being and doing; and expanded notions of power and empowerment as they relate to educational processes and imperatives.

The Bahá'í Studies Unit is searching for papers that explore contemporary research on the Bahá'í Faith, its community, texts, and tenets. The panel will be chosen from among the best submissions and will highlight the variety of research currently being undertaken.

### Mission Statement:

The Baha'i Studies Unit explores the study of Baha'i history, theology and spiritual practices as well as how Baha'i social teachings can be applied to contemporary social problems. The Unit welcomes research about the history of the Baha'i Faith, its primary figures and texts and Baha'i communities around the world. We are also interested more broadly in the role of religion and social reform in the modern world, particularly issues relevant to Baha'i teachings concerning racial justice, gender equality, science and religion, inequality, nonviolent social change, and human interconnectedness across the globe. The Unit seeks to bring together a diversity of perspectives and traditions, and all are welcome to participate.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE, 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)

### Chairs:

- Julia Berger, Baha'i International Community  
juliamberger@gmail.com
- Christopher Glen White, Vassar College  
chwhite@vassar.edu

## Bioethics and Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

#### Lessons Re-learned, Creating a Vision for the Future of Bioethics and Religion

The year 2020 brought many challenges, and new opportunities, to the field of bioethics and religious interpretations within the field. In accordance with the President's theme for the 2021 Annual Meeting, the Bioethics and Religion Unit welcomes proposals that bring attention to "the multiple ways in which religion speaks to the economic and social conditions of the past as well as the present" in the contexts of healthcare treatments, healthcare delivery, decision making, public policy, lived experiences of vulnerable populations, and conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches in the interdisciplinary field of bioethics.

We invite proposals that engage a variety of issues in the field, including but not limited to: a) the bodily autonomy and dignity of individuals or underrepresented or concealed social/religious groups; b) issues of moral benevolence or moral harm in a clinical setting; c) the distributive justice of biomedical and healthcare resources such as health education, experimental treatments, vaccines, and policies that expand the healthcare workforce; and/or d) bioethical issues within mental health and spiritual care for patients, families, and the healthcare workforce.

#### Faith in a Time of Covid-19: Religion & Public Health

Co-sponsored Session with Religions, Medicine, and Healing Unit, African Religions Unit, Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit; and Bioethics Unit

This panel invites papers that consider religious communities' responses to public health measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions on religious gatherings, mask wearing, and vaccine compliance. With attention to the history of medical racism and religious persecution, papers may also explore various communities' experience of health disparities and access to healthcare. We especially welcome proposals addressing these issues from Africana and other Indigenous religious perspectives in co-sponsorship with the

African Religions Unit and the Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit.

#### Co-sponsorship session with Religion and Disability Study Unit

Disability theory or disability experiences bearing on ethical concerns regarding healthcare, COVID-19, genetic therapy and counseling, transhumanism, or any other bioethical issue.

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Terri Laws, University of Michigan, Dearborn  
terrlaws@umich.edu
- Hajung Lee, University of Puget Sound  
hjlee@pugetsound.edu

## Black Theology Unit

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### Call Text:

The Black Theology Unit invites individual papers and panel submissions on the topics identified below and proposals on additional topics of interest that advance the discipline of Black theology. In this call for papers, we invite submissions that explore black theological discourse through topics such as:

Black Theology and decolonial (anti-colonial) methods  
Black Theology, black nationalism, white nationalism  
Black Theology, Trumpism, neo-fascism  
Black Theology and black bodies, Covid-19  
Black Theology and mass incarceration  
Black Theology and the censoring of Black religious scholarship in the academy  
Black Theology as Ecotheology  
Black Theology, black women, electoral politics and public life  
Black theology, Marxist analysis, and economic stratification in the Black community

We also invite papers that:

1. Examine fifty years of Teología de la Liberación – Examining Gustavo Gutiérrez’s influence and the task of the liberation of theology. In 1971 Gustavo Gutiérrez published the article “Hacia Una Teología de la Liberación”, followed by one of the most influential books of the 20th century, Teología de la Liberación: Perspectivas. To mark this year of celebrations, reflections, and conversations on this important anniversary we invite proposals that creatively engage Gutiérrez’s work from a variety of interdisciplinary lenses and contexts. We especially invite proposals that bring Gutiérrez’s contributions in contact with current challenges and future visions of the liberation of theology and theologies that seek to liberate, including problematizing the meaning(s) and praxis of liberation across the theological disciplines. (co-sponsored roundtable by Black Theology Unit, and Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, and Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, and Liberation Theologies Unit, and Religion and Economy Unit, Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, Roman Catholic Studies Unit, Vatican II Studies Unit)
2. Consider theologies and ideologies that resist social inequalities and re-imagine different worlds and other futures. We seek proposals that place King in dialogue with a Black Social Gospel tradition and the rise of the spiritual left. The most recent Georgia senatorial race, for example, put on display a Black Social Gospel theology as performed in the ministry and politics of Rev. Raphael Warnock, who pastors a church once led by King. Issues such as universal healthcare, worker’s rights, political disenfranchisement, and equal education standards, are deemed as “radical” by the so-called “Christian right.” We invite papers to consider the “radical” and the “extreme” in the thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. How might reading King in the Black Social Gospel tradition and the spiritual left lend insight into a theology that

imagines our collective future? We invite papers to reflect creatively on this theme and take up a host of issues that shed light on new ways of reading the Black Social Gospel and the spiritual left.

Proposals have a much greater chance of acceptance if they make clear the central thesis and main line(s) of argument of the proposed paper.

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 diasporic religious thought and life.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Jawanza Eric Clark, Manhattan College  
jawanza.clark@manhattan.edu
- Eboni Marshall Turman, Yale University  
eboni.marshallturman@yale.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 that theorize the contribution of the body and embodiment to religions. We invite proposals or panels presenting diverse methodologies and understandings of the body, as well as traditional and alternative presentation styles. When reviewing your paper proposals, we particularly appreciate proposals that do not simply discuss bodily activities but also explicitly reflect on the difference this focus makes to the academic study of religions. This year we are particularly interested in proposals on the following topics:

(1) porosity of bodies and/or flesh in various religious and ritual contexts, (2) inflected pain/religious experiences of pain, (3) immigrant and/or itinerant/migrant bodies, (4) the role of the body and/or embodied experiences at the intersection of race and religion, (5) embodied experiences of religion in pandemic contexts (co-sponsored with the Anthropology of Religion, and Religion, Memory, History, Unit (see full description below), (6) open call.

For further contextualization on our shared call for proposals on: Religion under Pandemics: Practices, Memories, and Affects  
Co-sponsored by the Anthropology of Religion Unit, Religion, Memory, History Unit, and Body and Religion Unit

Our units invite proposals that investigate how pandemics as well as societies' attempts to manage or mitigate their impact (e.g. quarantines, ways of treating the afflicted, memorializing the dead, etc.) intersect with people's religious lives, narratives about the past or sites of memory, and embodied experiences by foreclosing certain established practices as well as by opening up new spaces for devotional experimentation and meaning-making. We are especially interested in papers that place contemporary ethnographic work on COVID-19 in conversation with historical cases (and vice-versa), and/or which foreground how different methodological and theoretical approaches might help us make better sense of the roles that religion plays under the extraordinary social circumstances of a pandemic.

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 the Body and Religion Unit to refuse no-shows at the Annual Meeting from the program for up to the following two years.

### Mission Statement:

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

### *Listserv*

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/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 directly. 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).
- Traffic is low on this listserv.

### *Steering Committee Membership*

Those who take on the responsibilities of being steering committee members will participate in decision-making processes for the annual call for papers, respond to unit communication, and read, rank, and comment on submitted proposals in March. If a steering committee member finds that they are not able to fulfill these tasks in a given year, they should communicate with the co-chairs. If a steering committee member cannot participate in this work, the co-chairs may replace them.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Megan Adamson Sijapati, Gettysburg College  
[msijapat@gettysburg.edu](mailto:msijapat@gettysburg.edu)
- Katherine C. Zubko, University of North Carolina, Asheville  
[kzubko@unca.edu](mailto:kzubko@unca.edu)

## Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit

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### Call Text:

The “Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis” Group invites paper proposals on themes related to Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s life, theology and legacy.

As 2021 represents the ninetieth anniversary of 1931, we invite proposals related to any of Bonhoeffer’s experiences, activities or writings of that fateful year. Other topics on which proposals are encouraged are the place of Christ in an interfaith space, Bonhoeffer and criminal justice reform, Bonhoeffer and Reinhold Niebuhr, Bonhoeffer and Catholic thought and Bonhoeffer and 9/11 after twenty years. Other topics will be considered as well.

Please indicate your willingness to engage in interactive sessions or panels by (for example) submitting a manuscript in advance, delivering a paper summary, and engaging in extended Q&A, using high-engagement pedagogical strategies to present material to the audience, and/or, incorporating visual aids (AV and/or hand-outs) in your presentation.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Matthew Puffer, Valparaiso University  
matthew.puffer@gmail.com
- Karen V. Guth, College of the Holy Cross  
Kguth@holycross.edu

## Buddhism in the West Unit

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Call Text:

The Buddhism in the West Unit is seeking to fill two 90-minute sessions and strongly encourages proposals for fully developed panels, roundtable discussions, or other formats focused on a single theme, question, or (group of) recent publication(s). Several scholars have offered to coordinate with others to develop possible topics, as indicated below. If interested in one of those topics, please contact the convener(s). Additional suggestions follow.

Co-sponsored with the Space, Place, and Religion Unit:

Buddhist Tourism outside of Asia: Building on Brooke Schedneck's and Courtney Bruntz's Buddhist Tourism in Asia, this panel's papers could link to the volume's themes of secularism and the sacred, tourist imaginaries and place-making, and commodification in Asia, compared with Buddhist tourist sites outside of Asia. Other possible topics might include how Buddhist tourist sites are created in the West, the ways Buddhist tourist sites adapt to locations outside Asia, and financial and economic models of Buddhist tourism in diasporic communities.

(Convener: Brooke Schedneck, [schedneckb@rhodes.edu](mailto:schedneckb@rhodes.edu).)

A roundtable discussion on one or more recent publications in the field reflecting perspectives from under-studied communities or issues, such as Chenxing Han's *Be the Refuge*, Lama Rod Owen's *Love and Rage*, Cheryl A. Giles' and Pamela Ayo Yetunde's *Black and Buddhist*, Kevin Manders and Elizabeth Marston's *Transcending*, or other new books. (Conveners: Sharon Suh, [suhs@seattleu.edu](mailto:suhs@seattleu.edu), and Adeana McNicholl, [adeana.mcnicholl@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:adeana.mcnicholl@vanderbilt.edu).)

Buddhism in the West as a field. In 2008 Paul David Numrich suggested that the study of Buddhism in North America was a "proto-field." How far have we come since that time? Is Buddhism in the West a field? What does it mean to be a "field of study"? What methodological and theoretical assumptions define or shape this field? To what future research or understudied topics should scholars direct our attention? What are we not seeing? How do the structures of academic guilds (such as the AAR) shape and influence the field? Where have been and where are we headed? (Convener: Elizabeth Guthrie, [ekguthrie@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ekguthrie@uwaterloo.ca).)

Buddhism in the West and the covid-19 pandemic. How has the pandemic, sheltering in place, social distancing, etc., changed how Buddhists in the West "do" Buddhism? (Convener: Elizabeth Guthrie, [ekguthrie@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ekguthrie@uwaterloo.ca).)

Buddhism and socio-economic class.

Buddhism, politics, and the political.

Other panels or roundtable discussions on a single topic.

The Unit encourages participation by graduate students. We also welcome co-sponsorships with other units.

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

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Wakoh Shannon Hickey, Hospice by the Bay  
wakohshannon@icloud.com
- Scott Mitchell, Institute of Buddhist Studies  
scott@shin-ibs.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, especially those that address multiple regions and/or time periods. All proposals should demonstrate their coherence and significance in language accessible to the steering committee, which is made up of individuals with specializations ranging from ancient Indian to contemporary North American Buddhism. We ask that organizers work to put together panels that are diverse in ways including but not limited to race, gender, rank, and type of institution. WISAR (<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/>) is an excellent resource for ensuring gender balance.

This year, we again ask you to keep in mind the possible session allotments, which are as follows: three 2-hour sessions and three 90-minute sessions with an additional 2-hour session with co-sponsorship.

We have already accepted two panels that deferred to 2021: "Challenging Privilege in Buddhist Institutions and in Buddhist Studies" and "Manifestos for Buddhist Studies."

The presidential theme this year is "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures" and we welcome proposals on this topic. Please note that AAR will no longer hold 2.5 hour sessions.

As always, we encourage new and innovative formats. Please do not submit a paper as both an Individual Paper Proposal and as part of a Papers Session Proposal. We will consider papers submitted as part of a Papers Session Proposal for potential inclusion in an omnibus session of individual papers.

Below are some of the themes that our members have proposed for the 2021 meeting, but please also feel free to submit a proposal on topics not represented on this list. If you are interested in contributing to a proposal on one of these topics, please contact the organizer directly.

-Aesthetics, Fashion, and Community Inclusion in Buddhism—Contact: Amy Langenberg ([langenap@eckerd.edu](mailto:langenap@eckerd.edu))

How do styles of dressing, being, laughing, talking, emoting, moving, greeting, designing spaces, singing chants, and other aestheticized or affective practices strengthen, shape, or otherwise influence community inclusion and exclusion in Buddhist contexts?

-Poverty as Rhetorical Trope and Lived Reality in Buddhism—Contact: Chris Jensen ([ChristopherJensen@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:ChristopherJensen@cunet.carleton.ca))

In keeping with the Presidential Theme for this year's AAR ("Religion, Poverty, and

Inequality"), this panel will explore the polyvocal perspectives on poverty found in various Buddhist traditions. How is the suffering of poverty expressed, explained, or explained away? How are idealized images of poverty (e.g., the Buddha's paradigmatic renunciation) accorded with lived realities of economic privation? Given that South Asian perspectives on renunciation and mendicancy were not shared in many of the cultural contexts in which Buddhism eventually became established, this topic also provides a logical entry point into issues related to the creation and development of particular, localized Buddhisms, by considering the ways that the trope of poverty was translated or transformed in other cultural contexts. Open regional and temporal focus, centering on Buddhist narrative traditions (e.g., didactic stories, biography, autobiography, hagiography).

-Poverty, Misfortune, and Failure: Reflections on the Opacity of Karma—Contact: Kate Hartmann ([Catherine.Hartmann@uwyo.edu](mailto:Catherine.Hartmann@uwyo.edu)) and Brandon Dotson ([dotson.brandon@gmail.com](mailto:dotson.brandon@gmail.com))

The Buddhist doctrine of karma is often invoked to explain present misfortune. But individuals do not generally know their own karma, or what they might have done, whether in this life or a past life, that has led to current circumstances. In their paper "Narrative, Sub-ethics, and the Moral Life," Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen refer to this idea as the opacity of karma. This panel takes up the Presidential Theme of "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality" by asking how Buddhists at various places and times have used ideas of karma in making sense of their difficult circumstances. How do they talk about their own karma, try to discern the causes for present situations, or reflect on how karma relates to poverty and misfortune generally? The panel asks, moreover, how these articulations of karma might reframe the way scholars think about or teach about karma. We welcome scholars specializing on Buddhism in any geographical area or time period. Depending on the level of interest, we may propose a panel in the Buddhism Unit, the Tibetan and Himalayan Religion, Chinese Religions Unit, or propose a co-sponsored panel.

-The Lived Realities of Buddhist Economics—Contact: Matthew D. Milligan ([mattdmilligan@gmail.com](mailto:mattdmilligan@gmail.com))

To date, much of the study of the developing field "Buddhist Economics" has mainly focused on theoretical approaches to resolving perceived contradictions between Buddhism and the modern Capitalist world. Most work has sought to redefine the category of moral practice for lay Buddhists or to rethink political and ecological justice concerning activism. Paper proposals for this Call should seek to move beyond theoretical approaches to Buddhist Economics and instead analyze past or present Buddhist cultures in their lived religious realities across the globe. This group of papers seeks to bring the theme of everyday religion (through materiality, ethnography, ritual practice, etc.) into focus alongside how Buddhists throughout the world have engaged with or are currently engaging with markets or market forces. Open regional and temporal focus.

-Perspectives on Bodhicaryāvatāra VI.9-10—Contact: Douglas Duckworth ([tuf27084@temple.edu](mailto:tuf27084@temple.edu))

Seeking diverse doctrinal, ethical, and psychological perspectives on this pair of verses for short (5 min.) presentations at roundtable session.

-Class and Contemporary Buddhism—Contact: Justin Ritzinger ([j.ritzinger@miami.edu](mailto:j.ritzinger@miami.edu))  
Class has been an underutilized term of analysis in the study of Buddhism. AAR's 2021 theme of "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality" offers an opportunity to redress that lacuna. This panel will examine the role of class in contemporary Buddhist communities. How does class (broadly construed) impact Buddhist thought, practice, and lifeways in different societies? How does it intersect with other factors, such as gender? How do groups with different class locations interact with and/or position themselves vis-à-vis one another or larger social units (city, country, all sentient beings)? Papers focusing on lower-class or underprivileged groups and communities are particularly welcome.

-New Books in Buddhist Studies—Contact: Bryan Lowe ([bdlowe@princeton.edu](mailto:bdlowe@princeton.edu)) and Reiko Ohnuma ([Reiko.Ohnuma@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Reiko.Ohnuma@dartmouth.edu))

The Buddhism Unit's Steering Committee expressed interest in sponsoring a panel on new books. If you are interested in participating or organizing, please contact the co-chairs of the Buddhism Unit, Reiko and Bryan.

-Buddhist Responses to Covid-19 - Contact: Nicholas Haight ([nhaight2@illinois.edu](mailto:nhaight2@illinois.edu))  
This panel seeks to explore the various responses by Buddhist temples and organizations around the world to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic has spread all across the world over approximately the last year, it has changed the nature of religious activity everywhere. The questions this panel seeks to address are how have Buddhist organizations' ritual considerations, relationships with the laity, and other community concerns changed or stayed the same during the pandemic across the world? What continuities can we see from the past to the present with regards to ritual responses to this worldwide tragedy? How have recent trends in religion and society informed and affected these activities and changes thereof? This topic seeks to add to the swelling wave of scholarship surrounding the pandemic and its implications on the lives of people everywhere. It also seeks to offer a window through which to see how responses differ by country, culture, and outside trends and circumstances. Open to studies of Buddhist temples and organizations anywhere in the world, centered on the new developments in the last year.

#### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Bryan Lowe, Princeton University  
bdlowe@princeton.edu
- Reiko Ohnuma, Dartmouth College  
reiko.ohnuma@dartmouth.edu

## Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit

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### Call Text:

The Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Group 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.). This year we invite proposals for a roundtable that consists of a diverse group of panelists each engaging in critical-constructive work on a well-defined topic, such as a phrase of significance in the tradition, or a short text from the Buddhist canon. The format for the roundtable will consist in short (5 minute) presentations by panelists followed by critical-constructive dialogue with the audience. Examples of texts or phrases that might be the focus of the roundtable include the Vessantara Jātaka, the Heart Sūtra, or what the Chan/Zen tradition called "the great matter of life and death." Applicants are invited to submit proposals and rationale for the text or phrase to be the subject of the roundtable. For those who wish to be roundtable panelists, we also seek individual "paper" proposals on one of the three examples given above that are short enough (about 1,000 words) to be formed into a roundtable as described. We envision a roundtable panel that is diverse in terms of social positions, disciplinary backgrounds, and/or areas of concentration in Buddhist Studies.

### 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.).

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Barbra R. Clayton, Mount Allison University  
bclayton@mta.ca
- Hsiao-Lan Hu, University of Detroit Mercy  
hhu@udmercy.edu

## Buddhist Philosophy Unit

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### Call Text:

The Buddhist Philosophy Unit is awarded two 2 hour sessions, plus a third co-sponsored session; or one 2 session and two 90 minute sessions, plus a co-sponsored session. In 2021, two of our allotted sessions (2 hour roundtable and 90 minutes papers session) will be filled by panels that were accepted in 2020 but postponed due to the move online ("Mind-Body Philosophy in Buddhism" and "Roundtable on Buddhist Philosophy in Philosophy Departments: Training Students, Hiring, Teaching"). Therefore, we strongly encourage proposals for co- or quad-sponsored panels this year, and are unlikely to be able to accept individual paper proposals. The AAR presidential theme for 2021 is: "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures." Panels that reflect some aspect of this theme are especially encouraged.

The CFP so far is listed below together with "point-people" (people who have agreed to network interested parties, but will not necessarily organize the panel or draft and submit the proposal).

What is Buddhist Philosophy?: Global Perspectives - Sonam Kachru ([sk3hp@virginia.edu](mailto:sk3hp@virginia.edu))  
- This panel is a joint effort by the members of the Steering Committee. It is conceived as a virtual panel (on Zoom perhaps with an in-person audience) featuring globally and ethnically diverse perspectives on Buddhist philosophy. It, together with some of the proposals listed below, reflects the Buddhist Philosophy Unit's commitment to promoting greater diversity within the Unit at the AAR and in the field.

Buddhist Notions of Time – Roy Tzohar ([roytzo@post.tau.ac.il](mailto:roytzo@post.tau.ac.il))

Positive (or productive) influences between Hindu and Buddhist Thought – Michael Allen ([msa2b@virginia.edu](mailto:msa2b@virginia.edu))

Philosophical perspectives of/on Soka Gakkai in the US – Jed Forman ([jed.forman@gmail.com](mailto:jed.forman@gmail.com))

How to Teach on Race in Buddhist Studies or How to Teach on Racism from Buddhist Philosophical Perspectives – Karin Meyers ([karin.l.meyers@gmail.com](mailto:karin.l.meyers@gmail.com))

Roundtable on Yancy and McRae, "Buddhism and Whiteness" edited volume – Connie Kassor ([constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu](mailto:constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu))

Buddhism and Stoicism – Arlette Poland ([arlette@powerthinking.us](mailto:arlette@powerthinking.us))

Binary Reflection: Thinking through/with/against binary conceptions in cosmological, ritual and philosophical terms – Jennifer Eichman ([jennifer.eichman@gmail.com](mailto:jennifer.eichman@gmail.com))

### 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.

The Buddhist Philosophy Unit is committed to promoting greater diversity and inclusion within the Unit and in the field at large.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Tao Jiang, Rutgers University, New Brunswick  
tjiang@rutgers.edu
- Karin Meyers, Mangalam Research Center  
karin.l.meyers@gmail.com

## Catholic Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

The Catholic Studies Unit invites submissions on diverse subjects in the study of Catholics and Catholicism across time and place. We are interested in proposals that are attentive to the ways in which history and theory relate to one another within the field of Catholic Studies. Co-chairs are happy to consult with those who are developing individual papers, paper sessions, roundtable proposals, or other creative formats. The Unit encourages proposals on the following topics for the 2021 meeting in San Antonio, Texas:

**Sounds Like Catholics-** What does Catholicism sound like? The tradition has long been associated with the “bells” marking the high point of the liturgy. Catholic singing voices have been both celebrated and lampooned. In some contexts, even a bar or two of Gregorian chant has the power to evoke the tradition in an instant. Within and beyond these tropes are vast sonic dimensions that have defined, expressed, and shaped Catholic experiences. We invite scholars to identify one sonic expression (a sound or collection of sounds, past or present, human or not) that captures the density and complexity of Catholicism in specific social and cultural contexts. Presenters will be expected to provide audio representations of the sound and to speak for approximately 3-5 minutes about the Catholic-ness of the sound (whatever that means). Taken together, the presentations of the sounds are meant to foster a larger discussion about the sonic culture of Catholicism and the diversity (gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, nationality) of Catholic experiences and perspectives as witnessed in sonic form.

**Catholic Cities-** What does it mean to say a city is or was “Catholic”? We seek proposals that explore the idea of Catholic urbanism, both past and present, around the world. How has Catholic influence or power manifest as part of particular urban landscapes? How has that presence been contested, rejected, or transformed in the hands of a city’s inhabitants, either Catholic or not? How has it faded or gained a new presence? Papers or panels that offer explicit (not just incidental or implied) comparison of “Catholic” cities (Panaji and Boston, the different “new Jerusalems” of Latin American colonialism, Constantinople and Rome, etc.) are also welcome. In all cases, we seek proposals that zero in on urban spaces and their sensory and material realities.

**Indigenous Catholicism in the Americas-** In conjunction with the Native Traditions in the Americas Unit, we seek proposals that explore the ways Native communities in the Americas have been shaped by, engaged with, resisted, and/or indigenized Catholicism. Proposals might include analysis of indigenous Catholic practices, including memorialization, ritual, protest, education, or family life. We likewise welcome proposals that shed light on the borders between indigenous communities and their non-indigenous contemporaries, as these borders have been defined in conversation with Catholicism.

Catholic Abuse in Transnational and Historical Perspective- In 2002, when Boston reporting brought clerical sex abuse to the news with renewed force, leaders in the Vatican initially sought to blame the cultural context of the United States since the 1960s. This was an “American” problem associated vaguely with sexual permissiveness, cultural relativism, and a supposed “tolerance” for homosexuality. Since that time, we have learned that the crisis extends well beyond the borders of the U.S. into every corner of the Catholic world. It also has a much longer history than previously understood. We have learned that it extends beyond specifically sexual abuse at the hands of clerics and into other kinds of abuse by clerics and other Catholic authority figures. Seeking to offer a broader frame in which to situate the current situation, we seek proposals that shed light on Catholic abuse as a phenomenon that may include, but also exceeds the U.S., the late twentieth century, and the sexual. Papers or panels that offer explicit (not just incidental or implied) comparison of contexts of abuse across place and/or time are welcome.

Fifty years of Teología de la Liberación – Examining Gustavo Gutiérrez’s influence and the task of the liberation of theology

In 1971 Gustavo Gutiérrez published the article “Hacia Una Teología de la Liberación”, followed by one of the most influential books of the 20th century, *Teología de la Liberación: Perspectivas*. To mark this year of celebrations, reflections, and conversations on this important anniversary we invite proposals that creatively engage Gutiérrez’s work from a variety of interdisciplinary lenses and contexts. We especially invite proposals that bring Gutiérrez’s contributions in contact with current challenges and future visions of the liberation of theology and theologies that seek to liberate, including problematizing the meaning(s) and praxis of liberation across the theological disciplines. Co-sponsored by Black Theology Unit, and Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, and Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, and Liberation Theologies Unit, and Religion and Economy Unit, Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, Roman Catholic Studies Unit, Vatican II Unit.

2020 in U.S. Catholic Politics- U.S. political life in 2020 was full of Catholics. The appointment of Judge Amy Coney-Barrett to the Supreme Court, bishops fighting legal battles to hold Masses in-person during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the election of Joe Biden as the second Catholic president in U.S. history. We seek proposals that investigate the role of Catholic political life across the span of 2020. How did arguments about religious freedom interact with public health messaging? How can we interpret the role of Catholicism on the Supreme Court? What are key analytic tools for understanding the Catholicism of the second Catholic president? Papers or panels that consider the conflicting interpretations of Catholic politics, Catholic political life, and/or styles of Catholic political rhetoric are invited.

Structure

We urge all paper and panel proposals actively to address questions of format and timing. It is the Catholic Studies Unit’s preference to have individual papers never exceed 12 minutes in length and for every panel to include well-planned allotment of time for

audience involvement. We strongly encourage proposals that include innovative, interactive, and dynamic formats.

Mission Statement:

This Unit provides a scholarly forum to study the global Catholic community. 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- J. Michelle Molina, Northwestern University  
molina@northwestern.edu
- John Seitz, Fordham University  
jseitz@fordham.edu

## Childhood Studies and Religion Unit

### Call Text:

The Childhood Studies and Religion Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers and sessions that engage the intersection of religion and childhood or children, broadly construed. We are especially interested in proposals from non-Euro-American and non-Christian perspectives, and we welcome a range of methodologies from across the humanities and the social sciences. Our unit's sessions will reflect our commitment to diversity, including gender, race and ethnicity, field and/or method, and scholarly rank.

For the 2021 AAR meeting, we hope to organize sessions around one or more of the following topics:

- affect theory as it intersects with childhood, children, and religion
- children, religion, and protests: how has engagement with protests shaped children's spirituality and/or religious identity?
- religious toys, children's games, and the material culture of religion and childhood
- religion in child welfare systems (especially as part of the larger conference theme around "religion, poverty, and inequality")
- representation of children's voices

For session proposals, please indicate the type of session you are proposing (panel or roundtable); innovative and interactive sessions are especially welcome, and our co-chairs are happy to discuss what category might best fit any given proposal. In keeping with our commitment to presenting diverse perspectives and voices in each of our sessions, we also urge you to indicate what types of diversity your proposal or participants might represent.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

## INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Wendy Love Anderson, Washington University in St. Louis  
andersonwl@wustl.edu
- Sally Stamper, Capital University  
sstamper@capital.edu

## Chinese Christianities Unit

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Call Text:

The Chinese Christianities Unit welcomes papers from the following or related areas:

- Chinese Christianity and Chinese Communism. In the centennial year of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) founding, what can be said about the relationship between Chinese Christianity and Chinese Communism. Figures such as Chen Duxiu, co-founder and first general secretary of the CCP, saw in Jesus a "noble and great character," whereas Christian thinkers such as Wu Leichuan and Wu Yaozong saw Communism upholding the ideals of Christianity. Who saw the two systems as compatible and why, and who were the detractors? How would the rise of Chinese Communism affect the movement of Chinese Christians around the globe and, into the second half of the 20th century, how they were perceived by anti-Communist governments in Asia (e.g. Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Indonesia) and in the Western World?
- Globalization and Translation. Chinese have been known as a migratory people, from the Tang dynasty spreading through Asia, until the present day in the Americas, Europe, Oceania, and Africa. How has the global spread of Chinese shaped the globalization of Chinese Christianities—through texts and theologies (e.g. periodicals, Bibles, and sermons of Wang Mingdao and John Song), music (e.g. Streams of Praise and Canaan Hymns), nationalisms (e.g. mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, and American)—reinforced identities or divided subgroups of Chinese Christians? In what ways have these been translated across vernaculars, whether we speak of different Chinese languages or other dominant languages (e.g. English, French, Spanish, etc.).
- Media, Art, and Architecture. Related to the last topic, how have different forms of media, art, and architecture, been used to communicate Chinese Christianities. In what ways have art and architecture been instruments of inculturation of Chinese Christianities? What messages have been propagated through posters and paintings, whether to promote the spread of Chinese Christianities, or to attack it as a problematic "foreign religion" (from the late-19th century "religious cases" to the early-21st century discussions of "sinicization")? How have forms of new media (photography, video, and now, social media) been utilized by Chinese Christians—or limited by forms of state- or self-censorship—and how have they negotiated with the overall trajectory of Chinese print and digital cultures?

For a possible co-sponsorship with the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society:

- Race, Religion, and the "China Virus." The Chinese Christianities Unit and the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit invite papers on the themes of health, healing, and religion that take into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other issues that have affected both Asian American and global Sinophone communities, such as SARS, MSG Syndrome, and Mad Cow Disease. For instance, how are local, transnational and global communities interconnected amid the resurgence of anti-Asian racism in the age of COVID-19? While anti-Chinese sentiment is a historical phenomenon, what new connections do we see between religion, politics, race, health,

healing and medicine, with the use of slurs such as “China virus” and digital recordings of hate crimes in the social media age? We welcome paper proposals that include a variety of religions and traditions as well as analyses of a range of anti-Asian, intra-Asian and interracial dynamics. We welcome engagement with “democratic” versus “totalitarian” approaches to pandemic life as well as examination of medical practices ranging from traditional Chinese medicine to charismatic healing.

#### Mission Statement:

This Unit 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Alexander Chow, University of Edinburgh  
alexander.chow@ed.ac.uk
- Christie Chui-Shan Chow, City Seminary of New York  
chui-shan.chow@ptsem.edu

## Chinese Religions Unit

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### Call Text:

All proposals for both panels and papers are welcome and will be given careful consideration. We encourage panel organizers to take various forms of diversity into account, including race, gender, rank, kind of institution, region, etc., especially for presenters and respondents. For gender diversity, you can look for participants in the database Women in the Study of Asian Religions (<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/>). Please feel free to direct any general questions about panel and paper submissions to the co-chairs.

If you wish to contribute to the following themes, please get in touch with the contact person attached to the theme:

Efficacy and Agency in Chinese Religions -- Gil Raz, [gil.raz@dartmouth.edu](mailto:gil.raz@dartmouth.edu)

Superstition as a Category in Chinese Religions -- Katherine

Alexander, [katherine.alexander@colorado.edu](mailto:katherine.alexander@colorado.edu)

Chinese Religious Novels and Fictional Figures -- Chloe Starr, [chloe.starr@yale.edu](mailto:chloe.starr@yale.edu)

Religious Diversity in Sichuan/Southwest China -- Elena Valussi, [evalussi@luc.edu](mailto:evalussi@luc.edu)

Poverty, Misfortune, and Failure: Reflections on the Opacity of Karma -- Kate

Hartmann, [Catherine.Hartmann@uwyo.edu](mailto:Catherine.Hartmann@uwyo.edu); and/or Brandon

Dotson, [dotson.brandon@gmail.com](mailto:dotson.brandon@gmail.com)

The Buddhist doctrine of karma is often invoked to explain present misfortune. But individuals do not generally know their own karma, or what they might have done, whether in this life or a past life, that has led to current circumstances. In their paper "Narrative, Sub-ethics, and the Moral Life," Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen refer to this idea as the opacity of karma. This panel takes up the Presidential Theme of "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality" by asking how Buddhists at various places and times have used ideas of karma in making sense of their difficult circumstances. How do they talk about their own karma, try to discern the causes for present situations, or reflect on how karma relates to poverty and misfortune generally? The panel asks, moreover, how these articulations of karma might reframe the way scholars think about or teach about karma. We welcome scholars specializing on Buddhism in any geographical area or time period. Depending on the level of interest, we may propose a panel in the Buddhism Unit, the Tibetan and Himalayan Religion, Chinese Religions Unit, or propose a co-sponsored panel.

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Rongdao Lai, McGill University  
rongdao.lai@mcgill.ca
- Anna Sun, Duke University  
anna.x.sun@duke.edu

## Christian Spirituality Unit

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Call Text:

The Christian Spirituality Program Unit is seeking proposals for papers on the following topics:

- Earth Community and ecological hermeneutics in Christian Spirituality studies
- Christian Spirituality resources for confronting racism
- Spirituality resources for the challenges facing higher education
- Hermit Spirituality: How Historical and Living Figures Inform Solitary Dwelling in a Time of COVID
- Innovations in Christian faith community and spiritual practice during a time of COVID
- The wall between the US and Mexico: What does Christian Spirituality offer in terms of critique and resolution?

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Margaret Benefiel, Shalem Institute For Spiritual Formation  
margaret@shalem.org
- Beringia Zen, Saint Agnes Medical Center  
Beringia.Zen@samc.com

## Christian Systematic Theology Unit

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### Call Text:

The Christian Systematic Theology Section invites proposals for individual papers or complete panels related to our theme of participation. We invite proposals to consider the nature of participation as deployed in Christian theology. We welcome both arguments for and against the use of participation as a theological category, as well as discussions making use of this category to advance substantive claims. We are especially interested in work that clearly indicates just what is meant by its use of the term, filling it out with specific and meaningful content.

Papers should be constructive or synthetic rather than merely historical or analytical in nature, but grounding in traditional texts and discussions is desired. We especially invite proposals related to the following sub-themes:

- Transformation (in God and in creatures), including justification and sanctification
- Christology
- Ecclesiology
- Sacraments
- Ethics (imitatio Christi)
- Suffering and embodiment as participation in Christ
- Theological participation applied to political participation and/or issues of social justice
- Exclusion within / from the Christian community
- Epistemology
- Eschatology
- Conversations with Orthodoxy (synergy, theosis)

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Oliver Crisp, University of St Andrews  
odc@st-andrews.ac.uk
- Natalia Marandiuc, Southern Methodist University  
nmarandiuc@smu.edu

## Class, Religion, and Theology Unit

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Call Text:

General Guidance: Proposals in response to the calls below should clearly indicate how consideration of class inequalities and dynamics shapes the paper's analysis or conclusions and/or how the paper foregrounds issues of class, labor, or workers (while recognizing their intersections with other dimensions of inequality).

1) Class/Labor/Workers in the COVID Crisis:

We invite papers that consider what the COVID pandemic (and various responses to and consequences of it) has revealed or obscured, transformed, or intensified in class inequalities, labor relations/processes, workers' experiences, and/or power differences. Papers might, for example, explicate the category of "essential worker" as an economic-political-moral phenomenon or explore how the meaning of work has shifted along deeply class-inflected lines (e.g., for frontline workers vs. middle-class parents working from home vs. newly unemployed workers). Or papers might explore class inequalities and power dynamics in the various crises resulting from (or intensified by) the initial COVID crisis, for instance: crises of care, of healthcare access, of employment, of funding for public services, of disparate responses to science and scientific strategies.

2) General Call:

We invite papers that demonstrate the continuing significance of class, labor, and workers' issues in the study of religion and theology or address major questions in the study of class, labor, or workers. Some questions meant as illustrative/evocative examples are the following:

- How do/ought scholars of religion and theology acknowledge, define, and address class inequality in their scholarship and/or teaching?
- How does the class-position of scholars of religion and theology affect our scholarship and/or teaching and how ought we be critically self-reflective about this in our scholarship and/or teaching?
- How do class inequalities within the academy relate to class inequalities and power dynamics in society overall?
- What are the prospects for democracy in light of present (and worsening) class inequalities?

3) For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religious Conversions Unit:

We invite papers that compare and/or connect religious conversion and coming to class consciousness as two modes/forms of "conversion."

4) For a possible co-sponsored session with the Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit:

In light of the AAR presidential theme of "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures," we invite proposals that discuss ways faculty have incorporated class and power analysis into religious studies courses. How do we assist students to do critical analysis of our economic and political structures and systems and how do we impassion them to envision and promote transformative social change that addresses poverty and inequality? We are especially interested in proposals that understand class as a power structure not only as unequal income/wealth

distribution, as well as proposals that foreground working-class employees and communities.

5) For a possible co-sponsored session with the Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty Committee:

We invite proposals that address any aspect of the structure of academic labor or the experiences of contingent faculty, within the discipline of religious and theological studies or in the humanities/academy more broadly. We are especially interested in papers that

(a) explore the various forms that contingent academic labor takes and the different experiences of economic precarity and institutional and/or guild status they entail; or  
(b) name and confront (income, power, recognition, or other) barriers to solidarity between contingent and tenured/tenure-eligible faculty and/or between faculty and other higher ed laborers and explore possibilities of fomenting solidarity.

6) For a co-sponsored session with Black Theology Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, Liberation Theologies Unit, Religion and Economy Unit, Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, Roman Catholic Studies Unit, and Vatican II Studies Unit:

"Fifty years of *Teología de la Liberación* – Examining Gustavo Gutiérrez’s Influence and the Task of the Liberation of Theology"

In 1971 Gustavo Gutiérrez published the article “Hacia Una Teología de la Liberación,” followed by one of the most influential books of the 20th century, *Teología de la Liberación: Perspectivas*. To mark this year of celebrations, reflections, and conversations on this important anniversary we invite proposals that creatively engage Gutiérrez’s work from a variety of interdisciplinary lenses and contexts. We especially invite proposals that bring Gutiérrez’s contributions in contact with current challenges and future visions of the liberation of theology and theologies that seek to liberate, including problematizing the meaning(s) and praxis of liberation across the theological disciplines.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Jeremy Posadas, Austin College

prof.posadas@gmail.com

- Rosetta E. Ross, Spelman College  
rross@spelman.edu

## Cognitive Science of Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

1. Current Theories and Applications of the Cognitive Science of Religion. This call is intentionally broad in scope. We invite scholars who are using current cognitive theories and/or applied research in the study of religion, religions, or religious-related phenomena to submit a proposal for a paper or panel session for inclusion in the 2021 AAR-CSR Unit's sessions.
2. Book panel on Robert McCauley and George Graham's, "Hearing Voices and Other Matters of the Mind: What Mental Abnormalities Can Teach Us About Religions" (Oxford University Press, 2020). This panel includes a presentation by the authors, followed by responses from panelists from the perspective of religious studies, psychiatry, psychology, and cultural anthropology.
3. Neuroscientific and Cognitive Approaches to Conversion (co-sponsorship with the Religious Conversions Unit): this call invites papers grounded in cognitive and/or neuroscientific approaches to understanding religious conversion. Potential topics include brain-based technologies for spiritual enhancement (e.g., "Spirit Tech" by Wildman and Stockly); spiritual practices' effects on the brain (e.g., "When God Talks Back" by Tanya Luhrmann); the relationship between mindfulness, meditation and neuroplasticity; and similar topics.
4. Evolutionary approaches to the cognitive science of religion. We invite scholars who are using current evolutionary theories and/or applied research (e.g., cultural evolution, by-product and adaptationist arguments, gene-culture co-evolution, etc.) in the study of religious ritual and behavior, as well as the formation and persistence of religions, religious groups, and religious-related phenomena to submit a proposal for a paper or panel session for inclusion in the 2021 AAR-CSR Unit's sessions.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

## INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Hillary Lenfesty, Arizona State University  
lenfesty@asu.edu
- Paul Robertson, University of New Hampshire  
paul.robertson@unh.edu

## Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit

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### Call Text:

For 2021, the Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit will hold postponed panels from 2020, and is not asking for new proposals this year.

### Postponed sessions will be:

#### Theories of Violence

Religion, Violence, and Surveillance  
Co-Sponsored with Religion and Politics Unit

Religion, Violence, and Xenophobia  
Co-Sponsored with the SBL Violence and Representations of Violence in Antiquity Unit

### 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, uprooted-ness, 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.

### Method of Submission:

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

### Chairs:

- Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Moravian College  
denton-borhaugk@moravian.edu
- Diane Fruchtman, Rutgers University  
dsf79@religion.rutgers.edu

## Comparative Religious Ethics Unit

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Call Text:

Reflecting this year's presidential theme of "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures," our call for papers focuses on the potential contributions of comparative religious ethics on understanding poverty and inequality in normative contexts. Themes especially welcome this year include the following:

1. Normative Responses to the Pandemic  
What has been the response of particular faith communities during the pandemic in articulating their normative visions through concrete relief efforts? How have they prioritized particular kinds of relief and what criteria have they used in determining which communities or groups to help? We invite empirical case studies that highlight the specific, lived ways that particular religious communities are responding to the pandemic.
2. Caste as a Category of Interpretation  
In response to Isabel Wilkerson's "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent," how does the category of caste transform or alter our understanding of poverty and inequality, particularly in those contexts like the United States where caste has not traditionally served as a category of analysis? What are the "consequences of caste"? How do these consequences figure in the differential outcomes of human development and the distribution of the goods of social cooperation?
3. Alienation and Human Connection  
What can comparative religious ethics tell us about the human implications of living in a time of pandemic, particularly in regard to psychological states such as grief, loneliness, and alienation? What do normative traditions recommend in regard to repairing the fragmentation of our collective lives and asserting human connection even in the midst of a pandemic?
4. Justifying Inequality  
How do religious and normative traditions justify social statuses, hierarchies, and entrenched inequalities? Can these rationalizations of social inequalities be reconciled with normative exhortations by those same traditions on our collective responsibilities towards the poor and dispossessed?
5. Sumner B. Twiss's Contributions to CRE  
Sumner Twiss has been a signal voice in the field of comparative religious ethics from its inception in the 1970s as a discrete academic subject to its maturation in the 21st century. Four decades after the publication of *Comparative Religious Ethics*, what has been the impact of Twiss's work on CRE in regard to methodology, the self-understanding of the field, and the role of CRE within the larger academy.

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 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.

Method of Submission: INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Jonathan K. Crane, Emory University  
jonathan.k.crane@emory.edu
- Jung Lee, Northeastern University  
ju.lee@neu.edu

## Comparative Studies in Religion Unit

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Call Text:

We invite papers on the topics below. Submissions for panels or roundtables not listed here are also welcome.

- "Troubling Topics, Sacred Texts": Sacred texts continue to inspire a diversity of scholarship that seeks to transform the ancient into the contemporary, the remote into the immediate, and the distant into the visceral experience. At the same time, the texts confront a plethora of troubling topics. Reflecting the spirit of comparative studies in religion seriously engaging two or more religious traditions around a common topic and the recent publication of *Troubling Topics, Sacred Texts: Readings in Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Qur'an* (De Gruyter 2021), this panel focuses attention on how not only sacred texts themselves but their religious inflections function to manage, signify, and negotiate the most troubling of topics. Veering towards a cultural studies lens, the panel seeks to remove the auratic nature of texts and recognize the profound cultural consequences of their receptions, cooption, and polemic power. In addition to a polymorphous array of troubling topics, a variety of discursive methodologies is also invited. All are ways to better appreciate the rich landscape that inspired the many voices, often hidden in plain sight, of these texts. Invitations will be made but submissions by those inspired by the topic are invited. Please contact Roberta Sabbath, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Email: [roberta.sabbath@unlv.edu](mailto:roberta.sabbath@unlv.edu).

- "Poison, Poisoners, & Religion": This comparative panel aims to bring together scholars whose research engages relationships between religion and poison or poisoners, broadly defined. In particular, as we aim for the panel to be comparative in terms of method, papers would ideally themselves contain elements of a comparative project. That said, "poison," herein, can refer to all sorts of phenomena, from the metaphoric to the literal, from the creation and casting of poison to the religious elements of antidotes, from the venom of sacred animals to religion as poison. Please contact Eric Mortensen, Professor of Religious Studies at Guilford College. Email: [emortens@guilford.edu](mailto:emortens@guilford.edu).

- "Colors in Religion": This call seeks papers that deal with color (hue) as a religious category. Possible topics might relate to philosophies of optics and perception, color semiotics in visual and material culture, the sacrality of pigments, or any other aspect of color that fits within the scope of religious studies. Papers with a comparative approach are particularly welcome. Please contact Eric Huntington. Email: [erhuntington@gmail.com](mailto:erhuntington@gmail.com).

- Women and Revelation in India, China, and Tibet

We would like to organize a panel that explores the central role of narrative (especially hagiography) in the process of building a community, and the key role of women (divine, human, and everything in between) play in the writing, transmission, and alteration of revelatory literature. The focus will be on the historical literature of China, India, and Tibet, and compare the shared modes of textual production in these regions. Please contact Jue Liang ([liangj@denison.edu](mailto:liangj@denison.edu)) or Jonathan Pettit ([jeep@hawaii.edu](mailto:jeep@hawaii.edu)) if you are interested in contributing or have any questions. (Possible co-sponsorship with Arts,

Literature, and Religion Unit, Comparative Studies in Religion Unit, and Women and Religion Unit.)

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).

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

We do not consider individual paper submissions, only roundtables or panels.

Chairs:

- Oliver Freiberger, University of Texas, Austin  
[of@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:of@austin.utexas.edu)
- Massimo Rondolino, Carroll University  
[mrondoli@carrollu.edu](mailto:mrondoli@carrollu.edu)

## Comparative Theology Unit

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Call Text:

The Comparative Theology Unit of the AAR seeks proposals on the following topics for its session at the 2021 Annual Meeting.

The names listed here are contacts for the purpose of networking and organizing panels. If you have a paper or panel idea related to a topic listed below, the contact can help you network and form a panel proposal.

Climate Justice. We suggest a possible panel on Global warming and its effects on those most vulnerable. The issue may be considered in various ways. One avenue is how a given religious comparative exchange might mutually assist our posture towards those most vulnerable, particularly in its understanding of both the environment and the imperative to address the needs of the marginalized. Another possible avenue is, given that many climate scientists have conceded that global warming will be a fact and that we now need to address how to ameliorate its worst-case scenario, how would a comparative project deepen our understanding of this moral imperative?—Peter Feldmeier [peter.Feldmeier@utoledo.edu](mailto:peter.Feldmeier@utoledo.edu)

Disease in Comparison. I can help connect scholars interested in approaches to disease form a panel proposal. The pandemic challenges all religions to think theologically about their understanding of disease and suffering--broadly understood as physical, emotional, and spiritual. What new dimensions can a comparative approach contribute to your tradition?— Bede Bidlack, [bbidlack@anselm.edu](mailto:bbidlack@anselm.edu)

Comparative, Liberation, and Contextual Theology: Solidarity and Communion. In line with the 2021 AAR Theme, "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures," we are seeking papers or a panel on the theme of liberation theology, solidarity, and communion. In a time of increased inequality and inequities, as manifest in the recent pandemic, the global neoliberal order, and racial, ethnic, and religious oppression, how do various theologies mutually challenge and inspire each other to provide frameworks and resources for greater solidarity and communion? We are particularly interested in papers proposing contextual theologies that may provide necessary correctives to comparative or liberation theologies. —Axel Marc Oaks Trakacs, [axelmarcoaks.takacs@shu.edu](mailto:axelmarcoaks.takacs@shu.edu)

Comparative Nondualisms. Many religions use the term "nondualism" or one of its variations, and nondualism as a concept is occurring more frequently in popular religious discourse, such as the work of Fr. Richard Rohr. But "nondualism" has different meanings in different contexts. In some traditions, the term "nondualism" is synonymous with monism, asserting that only pure unity has ultimate reality. In other traditions, "nondualism" describes an open and relational ontology, offering deep relatedness within real difference. This panel will consider multiple religious perspectives on the concept of nondualism, to plumb the breadth and depth of its potential meaning. Moreover, in accordance with the themes of justice and equality for the 2021 AAR, the panel will

consider the sociopolitical implications of nondualism for our current age of division. (co-sponsored with Open and Relational Theologies Unit)

Theology, Literature, and the Arts. Proposals may include but are not limited to: Literary and artistic approaches to theological works, theological analysis of literary texts and art, rituals and art, music and theology. If successful, this will be organized as a co-sponsored session with the Unit of Arts, Literature and Religion--Gloria Maité

Hernández: [ghernandez@wcupa.edu](mailto:ghernandez@wcupa.edu)

We also encourage panel or paper proposals on the following themes that were offered at the business meeting:

- Liturgy and ritual comparative work
- Hagiography in comparison
- Texts from Prison: using prison as a site for comparative theology (perhaps consider Hong Kong's situation)
- Artificial Intelligence and non-human consciousness: This could be a comparative between AI and humans or such issues as angels and demons (etc.) in comparison interreligiously.
- Comparative theology and post-colonialism. This may become a collaboration with the Interreligious Studies group. This could also address how comparative theology can act as an example of western hegemony. (A concern was raised that in the past such projects tended to be either non-theological or non-comparative.)

Panel proposals must include a diversity statement wherein the conveyor explains in what ways the panel is diverse or the rationale for a lack of diversity.

Process:

Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Bede Bidlack, Saint Anselm College  
bbidlack@anselm.edu
- Wilhelmus Valkenberg, Catholic University of America  
valkenberg@cua.edu

## Confucian Traditions Unit

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Call Text:

We welcome full panel proposals and individual paper submissions on the following themes for 2021.

- Lineage in Confucianism, and in various constructions/interpretations of Confucianism
- Rhetorical analysis of the dialogue form in Confucian texts, including its implications for both textual analysis and teaching philosophy
- Theorizing relationality in Confucianism; this could include comparisons with other approaches/traditions
- Confucianism and resilience or reconstruction; responses to tragic loss or destruction
- Discussion of a recent book or books on any aspect of Confucian Studies
- Translation workshop on a primary text

Other topics are also welcome, as are co-sponsored sessions with other Units.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Michael Ing, Indiana University  
ming@indiana.edu
- Aaron Stalnaker, Indiana University  
astalnak@indiana.edu

## Contemplative Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

- Contemplative Studies contributions to Wellness and Well-being in Human Flourishing, including how digital technology could support, rather than detract from, human flourishing, including mental health. Contact person, Michael Sheehy, [ms4qm@virginia.edu](mailto:ms4qm@virginia.edu)
- Epistemologies of Sensory Experiences in Contemplative Practice, especially ways visual and/or auditory experiences have enhanced contemplative experiences, and how. Contact person, Judith Simmer-Brown, [jsb@naropa.edu](mailto:jsb@naropa.edu).
- Contemplative Practice Response to Global Crisis (like the pandemic)—the creative benefits of isolation, duress, challenge, including historical examples. Contact people, Loriliai Biernacki, [Loriliai.Biernacki@colorado.edu](mailto:Loriliai.Biernacki@colorado.edu) and Paula Arai, [healingzen@gmail.com](mailto:healingzen@gmail.com)

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Harold D. Roth, Brown University  
[harold\\_roth@brown.edu](mailto:harold_roth@brown.edu)
- Judith Simmer-Brown, Naropa University  
[jsimmerbrown@gmail.com](mailto:jsimmerbrown@gmail.com)

## Contemporary Islam Unit

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### Call Text:

The Contemporary Islam Group is soliciting proposals for the 2021 AAR meeting on any topics related to the study of Islam in the contemporary period. This year we have particular interests in the following topics and would welcome papers or panels:

- 1) on "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality," 2021's AAR Annual Theme.
- 2) on the relationship between Muslims and Indigenous Peoples in settler colonies (Canada, US, Australia, etc.) and emergent networks of solidarity.
- 3) on Islamic responses to/grapplings with migration and its diverse causes: political, environmental, socio-economic.
- 4) on Muslims in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Latinx Muslims in the United States.
- 5) on Islam, homonationalism, the summoning of queer and Islamic identities in contemporary racial, political discourse (secular, far-right), the sites where these discourses are produced and the functions they perform.
- 6) on blackness and slavery in Islam.
- 7) presenting fiction, poetry, or creative prose related to contemporary Islam.

Pre-arranged panels should reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank. We also encourage pre-arranged panels to take a broad and inclusive approach to what counts as "Islam," recognizing the theological diversity within Islam and among Muslims; this includes but is not limited to Shi'a, Ahmadiyya, and the Nation of Islam Muslims.

If your proposal is accepted and you agree to be on the program, we expect you to show up to participate in the Annual Meeting. However, please reach out to us if this is difficult for whatever reason.

### Mission Statement:

The mission of this unit is to provide a venue for discussing emerging issues and developments within Muslim societies and Islamic studies during the past 200 years, particularly in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

### Method of Submission: INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Zahra Ayubi, Dartmouth College  
zayubi@gmail.com
- Noah Salomon, Carleton College  
nsalomon@carleton.edu
- Kayla Renee Wheeler, Xavier University  
krw18@case.edu

## Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

Contemporary Pagan Studies is an interdisciplinary unit, and we welcome submissions of theoretically and analytically engaged papers and panels relating to modern Paganism and Polytheism, employing scholarly analysis to discuss the topic from any relevant methodology or theoretical orientation. In addition to receiving paper or panel proposals on topics generally in the purview of Contemporary Pagan Studies, we especially welcome proposals that address the following themes:

- What is the relationship between Contemporary Paganisms and other religious traditions and populations? Where are there shared goals, values and experiences? Are there common concerns such as sexual abuse, religious minority representation, and climate change? What is the impact and role of interfaith initiatives in increasing Pagan visibility in public discourses and in promoting religious pluralism?
- How are Pagans responding to various crises including economic, political, climate change and systemic racism? Suggestions might include explorations of ritual, political action and activism, community driven initiatives, or ideological shifts such as a tighter embrace of anti-modernism, orthodoxy or exclusivity.
- What is the relationship between Pagan worldviews and science, rationality and narratives of progress?
- Pagan responses to aging and end of life. As Pagans face the realities of an aging population, how are Pagan communities preparing? What are Pagan spiritual attitudes toward aging and the end of life? How do they ritualize aging and death? How do Pagans handle pastoral care and ministry for older demographics?
- What are some of the ways in which Paganisms and Witchcraft interacts with and responds to Neoliberalism? Examples may involve explorations of globalization, late capitalism, ideas about individualism and collectivism, marketing and branding.
- We are seeking presentations for a co-sponsored session between the Ecology Unit and the Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit related to ideologies of 'blood and soil' and white nationalism in recent radical political movements, and engagements with this in contemporary Paganism and Heathenry. Questions to address might include but not be limited to: what is the significance of religious identity, ancestry, and connections to land in these movements; how are concerns related to authenticity, legitimation, and "imagined community" involved in these narratives; and what implications does this suggest for developing attachment to place, and bioregional identity in settler and other populations?

### Mission Statement:

The Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit provides a place for scholars interested in pursuing research 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Damon Berry, St. Lawrence University  
dberry@stlawu.edu
- Amy Hale, Atlanta, GA  
amyhale93@gmail.com

## Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

In 2021 the Critical Approaches to Hip Hop & Religion Unit is moving one panels from 2020's pre-COVID program to this year's programming (ALLAH: Hip Hop, the Five Percenters, and Esoteric Constructions of Meaning). That said, we still have space for multiple panels and are calling for co-sponsorships with Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society and Religion, Media, & Culture units:

Race, Religion, and Rap in the Digital Age.

Women Still Run This Thing! Hip Hop, Womanism, and Collective Meaning-Making

Far too often the hypermasculine male is the trope that commercial Hip Hop puts out as "Hip Hop." As scholars in the field of Hip Hop Studies and Womanist Thought, we know this is not true. Women play an influential role in Hip Hop Culture; principally as it pertains to the social constructs of sexual orientation, gender constructs, race, and social issues. This year, we invite papers for a co-sponsorship between the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society and Critical Approaches Religion and Hip Hop. Topics can include, but certainly not limited to:

- Hip Hop womanism
- Hood womanism
- Verzus and Cancel Culture
- Meg Thee Stallion and #ProtectBlackWomen
- Hip Hop of the South
- WAP and politics of sexuality (Cardi B, Meg Thee Stallion)
- Women in Hip Hop & their historical contributions (Missy Elliott, Nikki Minaj, No Name, Rhapsody, etc.)
- Women & their role in activism & politics within the hip hop culture
- The construct of "male sponsorship" for entry into rap music
- Does rap music hate women?
- The gendered & social discourse of "Bitch"
- Hip Hop & #MeToo
- Women in Hip Hop & Digital Technocultures

We are also highly interested in papers for a following possible co-sponsored session with the Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Unit:

- Postcolonial Perspectives on Religion and Hip-Hop

Open Call. We welcome any and all proposals that are not specifically mentioned in the call for papers and we are specifically interested in topics and theoretical insights from outside North America.

We are also calling for proposals from the following areas:

- Hip Hop & politics in the era of #45
- The 30-year anniversary of the Golden Era of Hip Hop
- Hip Hop Studies in Higher Education: call for pedagogy and best practice
- Texas' role in the Hip Hop Canon and the products of Southern Rap
- Religion within the beat: music production and its transcendent rhetoric
- Is the Culture still committed to social change and social equity or is money, social media platforms, & followers the new social capital?

We also welcome proposals and panels that are not listed here and encourage those from a non-Western/ North American perspective to submit their work.

#### 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Monica R. Miller, Lehigh University  
mrm213@lehigh.edu
- Christopher Driscoll, Lehigh University  
cmd413@lehigh.edu

## Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit

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Call Text:

This year we invite proposals on the following topics:

-Sacrifice in the Time of Plague (potentially co-sponsored with Religion and Economy Unit). During the past year, the novel coronavirus-19 virus clearly has followed existing patterns of inequality when traveling through the social body. In this, scholars have experienced and analyzed the pandemic through a variety of critical approaches, including the study of ideology and capitalist abstraction, biopolitics and the precarity of disposable populations, utopian thinking, critical race theory, and the failure to socially mourn poor and legally and culturally disenfranchised persons. We ask: what determines who lives and who dies when worlds fall apart? We invite paper proposals for a roundtable discussion featuring diverse methodological and disciplinary vantage points that somehow analyze the role of sacrifice in our time of plague.

-A possible co-sponsorship with the Lesbian-Feminisms Unit that invites papers investigating what lesbian-feminisms might contribute to ethnographic methodologies, especially when investigating poor, queer subjectivity.

Some examples would include Matt Brim's 2020 book *Poor Queer Studies: Confronting Elitism in the University* and Casey Golomski's 2020 article "Countermythologies."

We also invite papers and/or creative engagements that explore their scholar-sisterhood and how it not only has informed and fostered their collaborative research and writing but also how Africana religious practices, theologies, and onto-epistemologies have potentially influenced their collegiality and their mentorship of proceeding generations in the field.

"Getting Back to Class: The Practical and Theoretical Poverty of Religious Studies in Dealing with Inequalities"

"Pandemics, Autocracies, Neoliberal Logics, and the End of Ideas: What is the Role of Critical Religious Studies in a Time of Crises?"

CTDR will also co-host (with Anthropology of Religion) a session on "Critical Terms for the Ethnography of Religion," which was postponed from 2020 and for which we do not seek submissions.

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

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Sean McCloud, University of North Carolina At Charlotte  
spmcclo@uncc.edu
- Kristin Scheible, Reed College  
scheiblk@reed.edu

## Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit

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Call Text:

Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit Call for Papers AAR 2021

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 2021 Annual Meeting, we particularly welcome proposals on the following topics:

- **Twenty Years Since the Towers: 9/11 as an Event in the History of the Discipline** – The 2001 al-Qaeda attacks on various US sites were not just an event of political and cultural significance, prompting virulent Islamophobia, new regimes of profiling and racializing religion, and a reformulation of US empire. It was also a major event in the history of the study of religion, prompting several long-overdue reckonings in the discipline. The years that followed saw a thoroughgoing critique of the secularization thesis; a renewed engagement with questions of religious literacy and public scholarship; and a sophisticated new body of work across the various fields of Islamic studies. We invite paper and panel proposals that revisit this formative moment on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary. What histories of this moment have yet to be told? What opportunities were missed? Where do we stand now? Co-sponsored with the Study of Islam Unit.
- **“Scholarship in the Time of Catastrophe”**—Upheaval has often prompted scholars and intellectual to question their normative assumptions and practices. In the 1920s, anticolonial and antiracist thinkers like Gandhi and Du Bois rethought European “civilization” in the shadow of World War I. More recently, scholars have rethought religion in the aftermath of the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition, the 2015 devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome papers and panels that take these or any other similarly calamitous event in any region of the world as site for exploring the cultural history of the study of religion.
- **“Sites of Collection”**—Collecting—whether of icons, plants, relics, verses, petitions, stories, texts, or sounds—is essential to the practice and to the study of religion. The labor of collecting may be institutionally sponsored or the work of devoted individuals; its sites encompass formal collecting institutions (museums, archives, herbariums, etc.), personal spaces (oral family histories, family bibles, attics, etc.), and digital practices (online archives, databases, server banks, etc.). We invite papers and panels that pose and address questions raised by the activity, sites, and diverse media of collecting. Such questions would pertain to the materiality of collecting, the politics of acquisition, display and circulation, the technologies of preservation and conservation, and the adjudication of rival systems of categorization and value.

- “The Study of Religion and Inequality”—The theme of the 2021 Annual Meeting is “Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating our Collective Futures.” To what extent and in what ways has the study of religion illuminated or obscured the ways in which religion reflects, justifies, or challenges various inequities, especially that of access to and the retention of wealth? Has the boundary between theology and the study of religion entailed the latter’s inattention to inequality? What topics, practices, data, or institutions come into view when inequality is afforded sustained attention in the study of religion? In what ways is the future of the field imperiled by persistent inequality?

This group 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Elizabeth Ann Pritchard, Bowdoin College  
epritcha@bowdoin.edu
- J. Barton Scott, University of Toronto  
barton.scott@utoronto.ca

## Daoist Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

The Daoist Studies Unit of the AAR invites proposals for individual papers and paper sessions concerning any aspects of Daoism regardless of time period, geographical area, or methodological and theoretical approach. For the 2021 AAR Annual Meeting in San Antonio, we welcome proposals for 90-minute paper sessions (3-4 papers, a presider, and a respondent), roundtable, as well as individual papers.

We encourage themes that are multi-disciplinary and border-crossing. Please consider submitting your proposal to more than one program unit.

We hope to continue reaching out to more program units and promoting dialogue between different fields. Additionally, submitting the proposal to more than one program unit will significantly improve your odds of being accepted. Co-sponsored paper sessions also introduce your work to a larger and more diverse audience. A complete list of AAR program Unit can be found at <https://papers.aarweb.org/program-units>

The DSU strongly supports diversity and inclusivity. We require all pre-arranged sessions to incorporate a diversity of gender, race/ethnicity, seniority, sub-field, and/or methodology. We hope that you can reach out to others by utilizing resources, such as The Women in the Study of Asian Religions database (<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/>).

All questions, including help with assembling paper sessions, may be directed to the co-chairs.

### Mission Statement:

The Daoist Studies Unit organizes the most consistent venue in North America for sharing research on the Daoist religion. The DSU is guided by a vision with three main goals: to reach into the vast recesses of the largely unstudied Daoist tradition; to reach out in conversation with the wider American Academy of Religion, and to promote the Annual Meeting of the AAR as an international venue for sharing and vetting research by all levels of Daoism scholars. Beginning in early 2021, the Daoist Studies Unit will also be hosting regular online forums throughout the year in preparation for the AAR conference.

### Method of Submission:

#### INSPIRE, Other

The Daoist Studies Unit conducts anonymous review. Except for the co-chairs, the members of the steering committee evaluate proposals with no knowledge of the identity of the applicants or the comment and score given to each proposal by their colleagues. It must be noted that it is the practice of the DSU for the leadership to help the applicants with session organization and proposal writing. This practice ensures a steady flow of high-quality proposals and ultimately phenomenal paper sessions.

Chairs:

- Jessey Choo, Rutgers University  
j.choo@rutgers.edu
- Jonathan Pettit, University of Hawaii  
jeep@hawaii.edu

## Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit

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### Call Text:

Death, Dying and Beyond Unit invites paper proposals on the following topics:

The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit invites paper proposals on the themes of space, place and death. This could include a variety of topics and issues surrounding COVID; mourning and ritualizing death from a distance; displacement and placelessness in death and dying; poverty and inequity in death and dying.

The Death, Dying and Beyond and the Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Units invite paper proposals for a cosponsored panel on the intersection and paradoxical connection between the technological advancements in regards to extending and maintaining human life and the accompanying increase in the use of technology to create space/platforms for mourning practices and expressions of grief. Are humans immortalized by and through these technologies? If so, how? How do these technologies affect the experience and expression of grief? How do these technologies affect perceptions of the afterlife or the beyond? How does transhumanism as an emerging field speak to, intersect with, affect death and dying studies? Ethics within death and dying? How has/might religious practice change to incorporate technology (e.g. especially if you exist forever within an online platform)?

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Candi K. Cann, Baylor University  
candi\_cann@baylor.edu
- Amy Defibaugh, Temple University  
amy.defibaugh@temple.edu

## Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit

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Call Text:

For a co-sponsorship with Afro-American Religious History Unit, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the African Orthodox Church, specifically:

- The relationship between the African Orthodox Church, and Civil Rights and Black nationalist organizations, like the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA);
- The place of the African Orthodox Church amid the Black Protestant religious landscape and/or other Orthodox churches in the United States;
- The church's Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Canadian, and African-American roots and transnational concepts of Blackness;
- Comparisons with historical and existing Orthodox Christian communities in Africa, and/or Black participation in Orthodox Christian Churches in America.

Session postponed from 2020, not soliciting new proposals:

- Current Debates on Women's Ordination to the Diaconate (Joint Session with Ecclesiological Investigations Unit)
- Spiritual Light in the Orthodox and Quaker Spiritual Traditions (Co-sponsored with the Quaker Studies Unit)
- The Past and Future State of (Orthodox) Theology
- Universal Salvation (co-sponsored with Christian Systematic Theology Unit)

Mission Statement:

This Unit focuses on the critical study of the theology, culture, history, and practices of the many different Eastern Christian churches (numbering some 260-300 million worldwide), including their mutual interaction and engagement with Western Christian and non-Christian groups.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Brandon Gallaher, University of Exeter  
[b.gallaher@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:b.gallaher@exeter.ac.uk)
- Ashley Purpura, Purdue University  
[apurpur@purdue.edu](mailto:apurpur@purdue.edu)

## Ecclesial Practices Unit

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### Call Text:

#### Ethnography, Embodiment, and Virtual Worship

We invite presentations that address theologies and practices of shared embodiment through liturgy in online formats and that use ethnographic methods to engage the possibilities and challenges that virtual formats pose for communal worship. Submissions that incorporate original fieldwork will be prioritized. While some faith communities have worshipped together through online formats for many years, the global Covid-19 pandemic forced many congregations to engage in online worship together for the first time. We seek papers or presentations that investigate pandemic practices of communal liturgical space and time, as well as the possibilities and limits of shared embodiment in digital spaces. Presentations that explore changes or adaptations to ritual practices such as preaching and prayer, communion and baptism, as well as occasional services such as funerals and weddings are welcome. What do ethnographic explorations of online liturgy reveal about changes and/or continuities in forms of participation and leadership? What kinds of access to both human and divine others have been revealed, challenged, or confirmed in digital spaces of worship? What questions does online worship pose for liturgical theology and practice, and in what ways might ethnographic theological research help communities to respond to these changes? Creative formats for presentations are also welcome.

### 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

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Jonas Idestrom, Church of Sweden  
Jonas.idestrom@ehs.se
- Theodore Hickman-Maynard, Boston University  
teddyhm@bu.edu

## Ecclesiological Investigations Unit

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### Call Text:

#### Comparative Liberation Ecclesiologies

In line with the 2021 theme of “Religion, Poverty, and Inequality,” we invite papers that explore contemporary ecclesiologies of liberation from a variety of perspectives and locations. As we contemplate the future of the churches, we hope in this session to examine some of the ways in which liberation perspectives inform church communities’ self-understanding, institutional life, ethical formation, and struggles for justice. What are the similarities and differences between the “classic” liberation theologies of the late twentieth century and the liberation perspectives that are proving most ecclesologically significant today? What are the new ecclesial and geographic spaces in which liberation ecclesiologies are emerging? How do ecclesiologies help or hinder struggles for liberation in relation to race, ethnic identity, class, sex and gender, LGBTQ+ identity, migration, and their intersections? We are particularly interested in ecclesiologies of liberation that are rooted in understudied or unexpected contexts, and we are open to papers that report on particular liberation ecclesiologies, engage in comparative study of two or more thinkers or movements, and/or offer constructive proposals rooted in particular contexts.

#### An Intersectional and Intercultural Church

As we meet in San Antonio near the US/Mexico border, we invite papers that consider issues of intersectionality and interculturality in ecclesiology. In particular, we are interested in the intersections of race, class, ethnic identity, sex and gender, LGBTQ+ identity, and other forms of identity within and between the churches. How are the voices of marginalized or minimized members of the church heard, or not heard, in ecclesiology and ecclesial practice? What might “ecclesiology from below” look like across contributing identities and in response to systems that oppress across borders between and within communities? How is the intercultural nature of the church treated, or not treated, in contemporary ecclesiological projects and/or contexts? What contributions might intersectional theory and/or intercultural theory make to ecclesiology and to practice in an intersectional and intercultural church? While we meet near the US/Mexico border, we are interested in reflections across any geographic locations, in numerous ecclesial and denominational contexts, and in relation to any particular locations marked by intersections and/or borders.

#### The Future of Church in a Broken World

As we contemplate our collective futures and the churches’ roles within them, we invite papers that investigate the future of a church of hope in a world whose challenges are unlikely to lessen in the coming years. Climate change, poverty, migration, and pandemics current and future are worsened by nationalist populisms; racism and ethnic prejudice; suspicion of science, authority, and institutions; gender discrimination; and a general state of polarization, division, and brokenness, including within Christian churches. What is the future of Christian churches and of Christian

discourse/understanding in a broken world? How can the particular difficulties that face the churches in times of global crisis be named and addressed? How do Pope Francis's encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, statements and witness by other Christian leaders, or other ecclesial resources help to address the situation? What developments in ecclesiology, eschatology, soteriology, missiology, or political theology might prove especially useful? We invite papers that address the broad topic of church in a broken world at both the global level and in response to particular challenges, including but not limited to those named above.

#### 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Brian Flanagan, Marymount University  
brianflanagan1@gmail.com
- Dennis Doyle, University of Dayton  
ddoyle1@udayton.edu

## Employment Workshops

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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 2021 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
- Virtual Interviewing

Have questions? Contact Employment Services at [careers@aarsbl.org](mailto:careers@aarsbl.org).

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Marchell Jackson, American Academy of Religion  
[mjackson@aarweb.org](mailto:mjackson@aarweb.org)
- Robert Puckett, American Academy of Religion  
[rpuckett@aarweb.org](mailto:rpuckett@aarweb.org)

## Ethics Unit

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### Call Text:

This year the Ethics Unit welcomes individual proposals, pre-arranged paper sessions, and roundtables on the following themes:

#### Anger, Contempt, & Affect in Religious Ethics

The confluence of social, political, and economic crises which engulf the globe in the early 2020s prompt reflection on the role of affections and emotions—particularly negative emotions—as both the causes and responses to our society’s most pressing issues. The Ethics Section seeks proposals addressing these themes in religious ethics, with particular emphasis on the role of anger, contempt, shame, incivility, and negativity in political, cultural, and religious discourses, practices, and aesthetics. In particular, we welcome proposals that engage these themes in relation to the Covid-19 global pandemic, state violence against minoritized racial, ethnic, and religious communities, white supremacist violence, and the role of anger and outrage in the current media environment.

#### Religious Hope and Religious Ethics

The increasing prevalence of various sorts of pessimism heightens the salience of religious hope. We invite papers exploring the relationships between religious ethics and religious hope. In particular, we seek papers that examine how hope complements and / or complicates ethics, for instance by sustaining moral resolve and / or by undermining moral urgency.

#### Reconsidering the Political Theology of J. Deotis Roberts

This session invites papers that critically examine the contemporary relevance of J. Deotis Roberts' political theology as it relates to Black religious life and politics, theology and praxis, engagements with Black freedom movements and other liberation theologies, and contemporary discourses in political theology. Given the reemergence of white supremacist politics, rise of abolitionist movements, deepening economic inequality, and other factors influential in the formation of the Black Social Gospel tradition, we also invite proposals that compare, contrast, or otherwise connect Roberts' political theology with the Black Social Gospel, in particular concerning abolition, racial capitalism, Black internationalism, gender, and current social movements.

#### Big Data and Religious Ethics

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Science, Technology, and Religion Unit on Big Data and Religious Ethics:

The accumulation and analysis of big data is touted as harboring immense new economic, political, and medical power. We invite papers exploring the potential use and ethical significance of big data for religious traditions. We are particularly interested in proposals that examine whether religious ethical traditions have sufficient resources to assess the collection, interpretation, and use of big or require fundamental conceptual and theological innovation to do so.

The Black Social Gospel Tradition and the “Spiritual Left.”

For a possible co-sponsored session with the Theology of Martin Luther King Jr. Unit on The Black Social Gospel Tradition and the "Spiritual Left":

In accordance with the theme for AAR 2021, “Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures,” the Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ethics Units invite papers that examine theologies and ideologies that resist social inequalities and re-imagine different worlds and other futures. To achieve this goal, we seek proposals that place King in dialogue with a Black Social Gospel tradition and the rise of the spiritual left. The most recent Georgia senatorial race, for example, put on display a Black Social Gospel theology as performed in the ministry and politics of Rev. Raphael Warnock, who pastors a church once led by King. Issues such as universal healthcare, worker’s rights, political disenfranchisement, and equal education standards, are deemed as “radical” by the so-called “Christian right.” We invite papers to consider the “radical” and the “extreme” in the thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. How might reading King in the Black Social Gospel tradition and the spiritual left lend insight into a theology that imagines our collective future? We invite papers to reflect creatively on this theme and take up a host of issues that shed light on new ways of reading the Black Social Gospel and the spiritual left.

Mission Statement:

The Ethics Unit seeks to serve the AAR by providing a forum for scholarly engagement with the ethical dimensions and interests of religious traditions.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Nichole Flores, University of Virginia  
nichole.flores@virginia.edu
- Frederick Simmons, Princeton Theological Seminary  
frederick.simmons@ptsem.edu

## Evangelical Studies Unit

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Call Text:

### Evangelicalism, Poverty, and Inequality

While over the last few years, the Evangelical Studies unit has focused attention on the definition and description of Evangelicalism, explored matters of race and ethnicity, and engaged the movement's varieties and breadth of identities, for the current year we wish to map our efforts more closely onto the AAR Presidential theme, exploring Evangelicalism, Poverty, and Inequality.

With this focus in mind, we invite inquiries for panels or individual papers that explore the successes and failures of Evangelicalism with regard to poverty and inequality, as well as how these relate to Evangelical identity or draw from underutilized resources within Evangelicalism. Interest remains in an ongoing critical evaluative interrogation of Evangelicalism, which may consist of Evangelical responses to poverty and inequality under the COVID-19 pandemic, or to matters like immigration, healthcare, law-enforcement, war, care for the environment, etc., including how Evangelicals have participated in pendulum swings relative to these matters.

We are interested in failures and successes of institutional approaches to poverty and inequality within Evangelicalism, in various Bible usages among Evangelical approaches to poverty and inequality, and in how these relate to Evangelicalism's ideals, historical institutional practices, and politics. We remain interested in interdisciplinary engagement, as well as how the conference theme has exacerbated matters of race, responsiveness, and engagement, especially relative to the history of the Great Commission. These questions may include new research in missiology, theological education, findings from the traditional humanities and social sciences, theology, and where might exist an identifiable collective interrogation.

One or two sessions may be co-sponsored with another Unit, including potential collaborations with SBL's Bible & Practical Theology unit, the Religion & Politics unit, or the World Christianity Unit.

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 nonevangelical 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE, E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail), Other Proposer names are anonymous to all during review process, but will be visible to chairs upon session construction. This assists in broadening the diversity of the participants, while allowing for selection of the best paper proposals without partiality. It is not ideal, but presently helpful - especially since Evangelical Studies has for a long time been dominated by white males, at least by reputation. We were very pleased with the range of our exploration of Evangelicalism in its complexity, both in the US as well as around the world. The current structure of the leadership of our group and steering committee provide the regional and interdisciplinary framework for our ongoing interrogation of the movement and its features, and we are very happy with our ongoing push for diversity, complexity, and inclusion both of concepts re. Evangelicalism as well as presenters and attendees of our sessions.

Chairs:

- Vincent Bacote, Wheaton College, Illinois  
vincent.bacote@wheaton.edu
- Jason Sexton, University of California, Los Angeles  
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 INSPIRE system, and must be submitted before March 1, 2021. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by April 1, 2021.

In order to establish a new program unit, the unit proposers must normally be approved by the Program Committee to hold an exploratory session two years in a row. After the second exploratory session, the unit proposers may submit their proposal for a new unit, which the Program Committee can approve, deny, or — in very rare circumstances — return for revision and resubmission after a third, final exploratory session.

### Method of Submission:

#### INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Whitney Bauman, Florida International University  
whitneyabauman@mac.com
- Robert Puckett, American Academy of Religion  
rpuckett@aarweb.org

## Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit

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### Call Text:

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. FTRR also plans to invigorate feminist analyses of religious discourse within a global setting. Urgent concerns include forms of religious violence and climate crises, among others.

For the 2021 meeting, we plan to host the following panels that were originally scheduled for the 2020 meeting and postponed subsequent to the meeting shifting to a virtual format:

- 1) Feminist Praxis against U.S. Militarism (co-sponsored with Women and Religion)
- 2) Emotion, Affect, and Social Change
- 3) The Violences of Teaching Theory

For 2020, we asked for papers exploring the role of emotion and affect in relation to social change, including racial justice, immigration, and climate change. We asked how feelings about the possibilities of social change impact the ways we organize or fail to organize and how studying religious affects and emotions help us better understand movements for social change. For 2021, we are particularly interested in exploring these questions within the context of the pandemic and the 2020 actions around racial justice.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Annie Blazer, College of William and Mary  
annie.blazer@gmail.com
- Meredith Minister, Shenandoah University  
mministe@su.edu

## Films

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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. Answer the following questions in the description of the session:

1. Why is this film important for scholars of religion? Please provide a brief synopsis of the film with particular attention to its importance for the study of religion.
2. Why is this film timely?
3. Does this film avoid proselytizing for a specific religious point of view?
4. Do you foresee this film raising difficult issues for some of the AAR's constituents? If so, what might those be?
5. Are there any copyright costs for showing this film at the AAR?
6. Who will lead the discussion/introduction of the film at the AAR and what are their qualifications to do so?
7. Is there any chance that anyone involved with the making of the film will also be present at the AAR?

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).

Method of submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Whitney Bauman, Florida International University  
[whitneyabauman@mac.com](mailto:whitneyabauman@mac.com)
- Robert N. Puckett, American Academy of Religion  
[rpuckett@aarweb.org](mailto:rpuckett@aarweb.org)

## Gay Men and Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

Gay Men and Lived Religion: What is the Distance between Theory and Practice?

1. The religious experience of non-Christian gay men, inclusive of liberation efforts, oppression, and strategies for survival.
2. Gay men's identities in an era of queer theology. The rationales for retaining a gay male identity, not as a rejection of people claiming queer identity, but as a meaningful religiously grounded subjectivity.
3. Gay men's apologetics and liberation in contemporary religious thought and practice, with reference to foundational and formative works of gay men's religious studies, ongoing efforts in academia and religious communities, and the identification of what issues and questions still need addressing. We are also seeking how the academic study of gay male religious identity is being used in faith/social communities.

Ally-ship, Analogies, and Gay Men in Religion

1. Exploring the risk of drawing analogies between gay men and ethnic/racial/minority religious groups.
2. Exploring the ethics of risk within a gay male context, with analogies to viral infections like COVID-19; HIV, etc., attending to religious thought and practice. We are also seeking applications, representations, or portrayals of the religious aspects of gay male experience with the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a typology to the broader COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Analyzing self-described allies within or from contexts that may seem (or be) antithetical to historical or traditional gay male liberationist projects (and LGBTQ equality broadly); for example, white nationalism, authoritarian political parties, religious platforms, etc.

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 (or about) gay men—or men who have sex with men—to religious scholarship in all its forms; we are especially interested in gay men's experiences across a range of religious traditions and in a wide variety of geographical contexts.

Critically challenges homophobic scholarship and religious teaching, on the one hand, and aspects of the LGBTQI equality movement that promote assimilation and normalization of hegemonic patriarchy and heterosexism, on the other.

Engages a variety of theoretical and political discourses, which fosters vigorous dialogue between essentialist and constructionist notions of gay male identity; this includes recognizing the insights and limitations of any theoretical and methodological approach to the study of religion and sexuality.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Michael Pettinger, NYU  
mfpettinger@gmail.com
- Richard McCarty, Mercyhurst University  
[rmccarty@mercyhurst.edu](mailto:rmccarty@mercyhurst.edu)

## Hindu Philosophy Unit

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### Call Text:

The Hindu Philosophy unit of the American Academy of Religion is pleased to invite proposals for two sessions to be held at this year's Annual Meeting:

1. Philosophical Roundtable. This experimental format will bring together several participants to discuss either a single argument or a closely related series of arguments from a single author. This year we will focus on Udayana's arguments against Buddhist idealism, found in the *Ātma-tattva-viveka*, section 2 (*bāhyārtha-bhaṅga-vāda*, "On the [Buddhist] Refutation of External Objects"). The goal is not to have traditional presentations but to create a space for lively and rigorous discussion. In lieu of traditional paper proposals, therefore, we instead invite prospective participants to write a short philosophical analysis either of the section as a whole or a single argument from the section. One might, for example, criticize Udayana's argument, or extend it, or defend it against further objections, or note something surprising in the argument, or simply assess its strengths and weaknesses. (Note that the *Ātma-tattva-viveka* has been edited and translated by N.S. Dravid, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1995. Additional Sanskrit editions are readily available through the Internet Archive. Selections have also been translated in the appendix to Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti's *Classical Indian Philosophy of Mind*, Albany: SUNY, 1999.)
2. Traditional Papers Session. For this session we are looking for individual paper proposals (rather than full panel proposals). We are open to a wide range of topics related to Hindu philosophy. Possible topics include but are by no means limited to: Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Materiality, Discourses of Ultimate Reality, Philosophy and Pedagogy, Lived Philosophy, "Philosophy" as a Category, Stock Examples, Philosophy and Literature, and Philosophy in Vernacular Texts.

### Mission Statement:

This unit aims to bring together scholars working on Hindu philosophy broadly construed, including not only the classical schools of Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, etc., but a wide range of intellectual traditions from the Vedic period to the present day. These traditions are vast and varied, engaging with questions of epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language, aesthetics, theodicy, ritual theory, ethics, and political philosophy, not to mention areas that have, arguably, no direct parallel in Western thought. Our goals are (1) to advance research in Hindu philosophical traditions, encouraging new approaches and new topics within the field; (2) to explore interactions and influences between Hindu philosophy and other traditions of South Asian philosophy (Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Islamic, etc.); and (3) to contribute to the study of cross-cultural philosophy at the AAR.

### Method of Submission:

## INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Michael Allen, University of Virginia  
msa2b@virginia.edu
- Parimal G. Patil, Harvard University  
ppatil@fas.harvard.edu

## Hinduism Unit

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### Call Text:

The Hinduism Unit invites contributions on the following topics suggested at the 2020 Annual Meeting as well as on other topics consistent with the Unit's Statement of Purpose. Proposals of complete papers sessions and roundtable sessions are especially welcome, as are proposals that specify creative and efficient uses of the ninety-minute sessions. For further information about potential sessions on the topics already suggested, please e-mail the points of contact for each topic listed below:

Hinduisms and Covid-19: Nicole Karapanagiotis ([nicole.karapanagiotis@rutgers.edu](mailto:nicole.karapanagiotis@rutgers.edu))

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought great changes to all areas of life. This panel seeks to document and explore the ways in which Covid-19 has ushered in changes in the practices of Hinduism around the world. Special attention will be paid to the ways in which Hindus have adapted their rituals in response to the pandemic, and to the ways in which these adaptations can help scholars understand—and perhaps even reevaluate—the categories through which we understand Hindu rituals.

Race and Caste in Hinduism: Joydeep Bagchee ([jbagchee@gmail.com](mailto:jbagchee@gmail.com))

This panel will explore the relationship of caste hierarchies to race concepts with the understanding that the relationship between the two is perhaps not as straightforward as Isabel Wilkerson's recent book has it. Nineteenth-century Orientalist writers were convinced that caste was simply the expression of racial difference, and in fact reflected the natural order of things. None of them wanted to eradicate caste, at most they wanted to see it integrated into a larger scheme of Christian and white supremacy. This raises questions for our academic praxis as well: how much of what we do has features of caste like in-group and out-group dynamics?

New Perspectives on Religion in Sultanate & Mughal India: Patton Burchett ([peburchett@wm.edu](mailto:peburchett@wm.edu))

Recent years have seen a spate of exciting new research on religion in India's Sultanate and Mughal periods, leading to more nuanced understandings of: the interactions of Sanskritic and Persianate traditions; the lives and influences of Mughal princes, queens, and emperors; the rise and impact of bhakti sectarian traditions; the crucial role of the occult in religion and politics; the emergence of sectarian (militant) ascetic communities; Hindu-Sufi dialogue; the rise and religious influence of merchant (and other economic) communities; just to name some. This panel aims to showcase, evaluate, and further contribute to such new perspectives on religion, politics, literature, asceticism and occultism in Sultanate and Mughal social life.

The Ethics of Digital Ethnography: Emilia Bachrach ([ebachrac@oberlin.edu](mailto:ebachrac@oberlin.edu))

Digital ethnography is not new to scholars of religion, but the methodologies used by digital ethnographers continue to shift as digital platforms themselves develop in new ways. With new methodologies, come new questions about the ethics of digital research

and about the ethics of digital ethnography specifically. This panel seeks papers from scholars of Hindu traditions who are engaged in digital ethnography and who are thinking through best practices vis-a-vis research ethics. In which ways do research ethics need to shift as we represent ourselves and our conversation partners and their religious practices in ever emergent digital spaces?

Hindu Temples and the Law: Sujata Choudhury ([sujata.chaudhary@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:sujata.chaudhary@mail.mcgill.ca))  
Pursuant to a string of recent lawsuits regarding high-profile temples, this panel attends to the ways that legal designations (from gender to public/private to juristic personhood) have been produced and employed in Indian jurisprudence to various ends. We are interested in understanding that production through the examination of cases dealing with temples and other religious institutions in various courts and in various regions throughout South Asian history and in India today.

Death, Ancestors and the Afterlife: Amy Allocco ([aallocco@elon.edu](mailto:aallocco@elon.edu))  
This panel engages Hindu conceptions of death and the hereafter, post-mortem rituals, relationships with the departed, and ancestor worship in Hindu traditions. Papers drawing on diverse sources, methodological approaches, and time periods are welcome, as are those that highlight vernacular perspectives, gendered practices, and/or ritual innovations linked to globalization, migration, interreligious contact, the pandemic, or other shifting contexts.

Religious Conversion in a Contemporary and Historical Perspective: Deepra Dandekar ([Deepra.Dandekar@zmo.de](mailto:Deepra.Dandekar@zmo.de))  
Religious conversion became especially fraught in South Asia, after the Charter Act of 1813. Though the Act did not haringer conversion, which was older; it inaugurated a new age of conversion as political and public, that continued well into the 21st century. This new age changed the ontology of conversion, producing institutions, print culture, and a sociality around conversion as imbricated with intimate family relationships, and claims, memories, and experiences of violence. Involving negotiations between local, national, and transnational individual and collective identities, converting, or engaging with conversion as a debate, became a cornerstone of South Asian colonial and postcolonial modernity.

Labor and Religion in South Asia: Manpreet Kaur ([mk3674@columbia.edu](mailto:mk3674@columbia.edu))  
We invite you to consider the varieties of labour that may be considered religious in the context of South Asian religions. We ask how histories of labour, individual or communal, may work along (or against) existing understandings of religious concepts, practices, and conventions, or work to forge newer ones. From philanthropy and service to radical imaginings of the future, from affective labor to bonded work, we hope that the papers in this panel will help formulate a new understanding of the connections between everyday work and religious labouring in South Asia.

Management in South Asian Religious History: Deonnie Moodie ([dmoodie@ou.edu](mailto:dmoodie@ou.edu))

This panel is interested in exploring if and/or how ideas about management of the self, the religious institution, and the corporation converge in various historical and geographical contexts. In particular, we are interested in how notions of management develop alongside Hinduism in global contexts from the pre-modern to the modern. How, for example, are notions of self-management related to notions of management of the corporate religious institution? How are religious ideals regarding management of self and society related to notions of the ideal manager of a business enterprise?

Hinduism and Writing Practices: Finnian Gerety ([finnian.moore-gerety@brown.edu](mailto:finnian.moore-gerety@brown.edu))

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Patton Burchett, College of William and Mary  
peburchett@wm.edu
- Deonnie Moodie, University of Oklahoma  
dmoodie@ou.edu

## History of Christianity Unit

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### Call Text:

The History of Christianity Unit invites papers that offer new interpretations of and findings in Christian history. While we are open to other panel proposals and roundtable sessions, we are especially interested in the following:

### Co-Sponsored Sessions

Upon the quincentennial of Martin Luther's 1521 expulsion we invite papers for review with the following units:

#### Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit

We seek papers on a panel tentatively titled "Interrogating Luther's Biographers." The quincentennial celebration of the German Reformation in 2017 also marked an increase in scholarly biographies and historiographies reconceptualizing Martin Luther. Recent projects have framed Luther in new theological, psychological, historical, and political contexts. For this potential co-sponsored panel we invite papers and panels proposals that interrogate Luther's recent biographers and historiographers. What new consensus have emerged? What approaches are privileged in the recent rejuvenation of Luther scholarship? What themes and trends become central for Luther's biographers?

#### Religion in Europe Unit

We invite papers that examine excommunication as a political and social (as well as a religious and theological) act within the European context. In 1521, Pope Leo X formalized Martin Luther's excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church, one of the most politically consequential acts of religious exclusion in European history. In order to interrogate the ongoing relevance of this historical moment, we seek chronologically and geographically diverse proposals that address excommunication as a political and social (as well as a religious and theological) act. Proposed papers might address: the formation and enforcement of community norms and boundaries; negotiations of religious, political, or ethnic identities, whether individual or collective; relationships between religious centers and peripheries; the creation of new religious communities and movements; mechanisms of social and religious discipline; and the wider social implications of religious innovation and dissent. We would also welcome papers that discuss the continuing historical effects of the Protestant Reformation--and the results of this separation of Martin Luther from the Catholic Church--on the shape of Europe.

We invite panels and individual papers that take up the following topics (papers highlighting material culture aspects of the topics especially welcome):

- Memory, Memorials, & Materials
- Pandemics in Christian Historiography
- "Premodern" Christianity in the East
- Texas, the border, and North American Indigenous traditions in the greater Southwest

- Uses of the Premodern in modern contexts
- Weaponization of Language

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Lloyd Barba, Amherst College  
lbarba@amherst.edu
- Trish Beckman, Saint Olaf College  
beckman@stolaf.edu

## Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Unit

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### Call Text:

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 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 confidence in nanotechnology, cognitive science, moral bio-enhancements, genetics, robotics, and information technology to achieve enhanced human capacities or extend the human lifespan.

Our Unit also welcomes proposals on:

Religious transhumanisms

Global South perspectives on transhumanisms

Surveillance technologies

Ethnographic and anthropological methods in transhumanism and religion

Climate change, enhancement, and transhumanisms

Animal liberation and transhumanisms

Additional constructive proposals for the future of religion and technology

Co-sponsored session: The Death, Dying and Beyond and the Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Units invite paper proposals for a cosponsored panel on the intersection and paradoxical connection between the technological advancements in regards to extending and maintaining human life and the accompanying increase in the use of technology to create space/platforms for mourning practices and expressions of grief. Are humans immortalized by and through these technologies? If so, how? How do these technologies affect the experience and expression of grief? How do these technologies affect perceptions of the afterlife or the beyond? How does transhumanism as an emerging field speak to, intersect with, affect death and dying studies? Ethics within death and dying? How has/might religious practice change to incorporate technology (e.g. especially if you exist forever within an online platform)?

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).

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Amy Michelle DeBaets, Hackensack University Medical Center  
[Amy.debaets@gmail.com](mailto:Amy.debaets@gmail.com)
- Calvin Mercer, East Carolina University  
[mercerc@ecu.edu](mailto:mercerc@ecu.edu)

## Indian and Chinese Religions Compared Unit

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### Call Text:

This unit invites proposals for either whole panels or individual papers on the following topics.

#### Border Regions of India and China

How is the concept of 'border' constructed, discussed and represented in religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism and Daoism? What are the directions of influence across and along these borders in historical and recent contexts? What are the connections between borderline and liminal practices/beliefs and geographical border regions?

#### Interaction of Local Gods and Cults with Institutional Religion

In which ways have local gods and cults interacted with institutional religion both within Indian and Chinese traditions and across boundaries? How do cult elements of South Asia travel into and manifest in China and vice versa? What was the contact and exchange between mainstream and ex-centric traditions and cultures? Which is "mainstream": State and court religion, or local and popular rituals and practices?

#### Comparing Tantric and Daoist practices

This panel invites in-depth comparative exploration of Tantric and Daoist practices. What, if anything, do they have in common, and what is unique to each? How are such practices expressed in different languages? Papers may focus on texts and/or material culture to draw out the imbricated aspects of these religious practices. Themes may include body, breath, visualization, ritual, hygiene, public space, architecture, social practice, etc.

#### Co-sponsored with Religion, Medicine and Healing Unit

##### The Materiality of Asian Medicines and Religions Compared

This panel invites paper proposals that compare the intersections of Asian medical traditions with Buddhism, Daoism, and/or Hinduism, with a particular focus on the material culture of healing. Topics may include the comparison of medical practices and practitioners, botanical knowledge, other materia medica, geographical routes of transmission, body map illustrations, surgery, merchants and markets, biographies, alchemical practices, gendered bodies, physical movements and bodily hygiene (such as yoga, martial arts, diet, etc.), food, medical records, and other material aspects of healing. Proposals should also attend to related theoretical issues.

### Mission Statement:

This Unit addresses two significant gaps in current scholarship on Chinese and Indian religious traditions. The first gap is in 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. Beyond Buddhism, we encourage comparisons between other native Indian and native Chinese traditions. 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Dan Lusthaus, Harvard University  
lusthaus@g.harvard.edu
- Karen O'Brien-Kop, University of Roehampton  
karen.obrien-kop@roehampton.ac.uk

## Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit

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Call Text:

### 1) Faith in a Time of COVID-19: Religion & Public Health Measures

Co-sponsored session: Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, the African Religions Unit, and the Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit.

This panel considers religious communities' responses to public health measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions on religious gatherings, mask wearing, and vaccine compliance. With attention to the history of medical racism and religious persecution, papers may also explore various communities' experience of health disparities and access to healthcare. We especially welcome proposals addressing these issues from Africana and other Indigenous religious perspectives.

### 2) Indigenous Religions, Rights, and Borders

Co-Sponsored Session: Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, Native Traditions in the Americas Unit, and the Religion and Human Rights Unit.

We invite papers for a session titled "Indigenous Religions, Rights, and Borders." This session will particularly concern Indigenous rights across borders, land repatriation, religious freedom, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Any papers on these topics will be considered. Given the location of the Annual Meeting in San Antonio, we especially encourage papers that explore the southern border of the U.S., rights and critique of rights from Native American perspectives, and mythologies about colonial expansion in the Southwest.

### 3) Indigenous Breath, Breathing, and Embodiment

The Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit invites proposals that explore the spiritual practice and creativity surrounding breath, breathing, and embodiment from global and comparative indigenous perspectives. Topics might include indigenous breath as related to COVID-19, Black Lives Matter, air quality, contemplative practices, body work, healing, and creativity.

### 4) Indigenous Motherhood, Child-Rearing, and Justice

The Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit invites proposals that explore traditional Indigenous practices of birthing and childrearing, but also related contemporary issues of care giving and reproductive rights. We also welcome proposals addressing indigenous conceptions of gender, motherhood, and coming of age ceremonies.

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. This Unit also emphasizes Indigenous Methodologies among other Humanities and Social Sciences approaches. 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.

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Gabriel Estrada, California State University, Long Beach  
gabriel.estrada@csulb.edu
- Seth Schermerhorn, Hamilton College  
jscherme@hamilton.edu

## Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit

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### Call Text:

The pandemics of the past year have pressed spiritual care providers to find radical new ways to provide care--from going virtual for the first time to becoming first-line responders. Others have been sidelined by the pandemic, reflecting a disparate impact on chaplaincy depending on the setting and institution where it takes place. We invite papers and panels on spiritual care responses to the pandemics (i.e., health, economic, racial, environmental, political) including critical religious/spiritual reflection on responses during the past year. Preference will be given to papers and panels that bring chaplains, educators and scholars into conversation and that are based on empirical research and include theoretical reflection on the assumptions that guide the work.

We recognize also that chaplains must be grounded in their own spiritual or religious tradition(s) while remaining radically open to caring across spiritual/religious difference. We invite papers and panels to discuss what, in training and educating chaplains and spiritual care givers, are innovative pedagogical strategies or approaches that are grounded in specific traditions, and draw resources from those traditions, to be able to provide care to individuals from other backgrounds?

### Mission Statement:

Chaplaincy is becoming more and more central to the religious/spiritual experiences of individuals and communities in the world. Shifts in religious leadership, religious/spiritual affiliation, and theological education are all occurring at a rapid pace; this unit helps shape AAR as the primary academic home of these discussions. This unit is not only academic in nature; its work is consonant with the AAR's commitment to the public application of scholarship taking place within the Academy.

This unit gathers researchers, educators, and broad-minded practitioners to extend and make permanent the conversation begun through an exploratory session held at the AAR in November 2018. Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care breaks down the barriers between these siloed communities and draws them into a common conversation on how best to meet individuals' and communities' spiritual needs today. Doing so requires:

- translating the research needed to support the work of accompanying individuals through growth, change, and struggle;
- investigating how chaplaincy provision is shaped by the people it is offered to and the institutions within which it is provided;
- asking how chaplains can be more effectively present in settings currently lacking spiritual care providers for those in need and how those chaplains can respond most effectively to the increasingly diverse religious landscape.

The mission of Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care is to improve how chaplains are trained, how they work with diverse individuals (including those with no religious or

spiritual backgrounds), and how chaplaincy and spiritual care coheres as a professional field.

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Wendy Cadge, Brandeis University  
[wcadge@brandeis.edu](mailto:wcadge@brandeis.edu)
- Michael Skaggs, Brandeis University  
[mskaggs@brandeis.edu](mailto:mskaggs@brandeis.edu)

## International Development and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

### Decolonisation, Development and Faith

This panel focuses on the nexus of decolonisation, development and faith. Debates on anti-racist and decolonised approaches amongst development/humanitarian researchers and practitioners acknowledge that local communities are central agents in their own liberation, yet they continue to be marginalised in decision-making and resource allocation by large parts of the international aid/development sector. The majority of people worldwide identify with a faith. The role of faith is often particularly strong in the 'Global South'. Local capacities, social capital, leadership, expertise, networks and service provision are often faith-based. Ignoring the contribution of faith in development/aid devalues pivotal dimensions of people's lived experiences and diminishes their sources of power, legitimacy, accountability and resilience. An inability to speak authentically as faith actors contributes to the erasure of non-white cultures and non-Western faiths. Yet faith actors are not immune from anti-racist and decolonial critique, and often have complex and contested histories that involve colonialism, missionaries, and conversions. Faith communities have a mixed record when it comes to challenging racism and other forms of systemic discrimination. Faith-based organisations perpetuate the same white supremacist culture and racist and (neo)colonial development and faith legacies as the broader aid/development sector, by failing to acknowledge colonial legacies, neo-colonial practices, the dominance of Western theological constructs, complicity in broader racist structures, and hierarchical power dynamics. Research on religion and development has not sufficiently contended with these concepts, if at all. This panel aims to give a higher profile to this much needed debate.

### Religions and Climate Action

While religious traditions might appear to emphasise that the natural world is sacred and to call for restraint in the use of natural resources, applying this in practice towards environmental protection is less straightforward. Sustainable Development Goal 13 calls for 'Climate Action' and target 13.3 to 'Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change'. Considering the highly religious nature of many Global South settings as well as their ecological vulnerability, this panel will examine the relationships between religions and climate action. What role might religious perspectives be able to play in addressing climate change? Alternatively, in what ways might religious beliefs and practices present barriers to climate justice? What do policy makers need to know about the religion-environment nexus in order to support local communities in developing culturally appropriate responses to climate change? What role are local faith actors playing in providing moral guidance to encourage custodianship and sustainable practices? How successful have faith-based initiatives been in inspiring action against climate change and what can be learnt from these examples? We invite papers that address these questions and are particularly interested in papers that have a practical focus and examine the role

of religions towards achieving SDG 13. We need to move beyond purely theological/theoretical accounts of how religions might impact upon people's relations to the natural world and instead generate research that can help policy makers appreciate the 'nuances and complexity inherent in religious values for motivating environmental action' (Sachdeva 2016: 11).

#### 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 humanities and social sciences. Despite this growing trend, until recently, religious and theological studies 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, practitioner-based research and reflection from the field and the encounter between private and public religion(s) in the developing world.

#### Method of Submission:

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

Papers of sufficient quality will be considered for publication in an edited volume on the same or similar theme for the Routledge Research in Religion and Development book series. (see [<http://ow.ly/FGEJb>])

#### Chairs:

- John Rees, University of Notre Dame, Australia  
john.rees@nd.edu.au
- Emma Tomalin, University of Leeds  
e.tomalin@leeds.ac.uk

## Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit

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Call Text:

The Interreligious and Interfaith Studies unit is committed to equity. If you are submitting a panel proposal, diversity of spiritual lifestances (aka religions) is of primary importance. We also consider gender, ethnic and racial diversity to be significant, and value voices from scholars at various points in their careers.

We invite individual paper and panel proposals that address the following range of topics:

### THE POLITICIZATION OF INTERFAITH

The politicization of Interfaith work has become increasingly prevalent in the past decades. This year we seek to explore how interfaith work may be weaponized by governments and similar groups to promote security interests, capitalist or corporatist agendas, and/or political objectives. Paper or panel submissions may also explore questions along these lines:

- How is pluralism sometimes weaponized to suppress religious diversity, distinctiveness, and/or impose homogeneity?
- What are some of the political factors that motivate various interfaith organizations?
- How have efforts such as Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), Prevent in the UK, the language of “moderation,” and the use of interfaith work to promote government security interests impacted peace and justice work among grassroots organizations?
- How has the rhetoric of toleration and assimilation been used to target vulnerable communities in parts of North America and Europe?
- What are some of the ways that interfaith work has been used for surveillance or the promotion of state sanctioned religious practice imposed on minority populations?

### INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

We invite brief presentations (10 minutes) designed to stimulate substantive conversation on critical issues in Interreligious and Interfaith Studies and engagement. Based on the success of our previous interactive workshop model, we specifically encourage proposals that address:

- Utilizing history in teaching Interreligious Studies
- Cautionary tales and success stories
- What does it mean to be an emerging field, and what are the new growing edges?
- Secularisms and interreligious encounter
- The changing nature of religious identity
- Interreligious Studies and public health--welfare of children, spiritual and existential care of our students, pandemic responses, health inequities, etc.
- Interreligious Studies and race
- Interreligious Studies and masculinities
- Pedagogies of CPE, chaplaincy training, and other roles in which interreligious competencies are of central importance

- Teaching Interreligious Studies in homogenous contexts
- Competencies in the field, including suggested course sequences and learning outcomes
- Recent publications in the field

Presentations unfold at separate tables, with attendees selecting the conversations in which they would like to participate. There will also be opportunities for networking with colleagues who teach in similar contexts or who are working on related issues.

Co-Sponsored Session with Religion and Ecology:

#### RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE AND ITS IMPACT ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

In partnership with the Religion and Ecology Unit, we seek proposals that explore the ways in which diverse religious teachings, traditions, and communities both resist and catalyze action in the public square when navigating the complex reality of global climate change.

Mission Statement:

This Unit creates space for critical interdisciplinary engagement with interfaith and interreligious studies, examining the many modes of response to the reality of religious pluralism (theological, philosophical, historical, scriptural, ethical, praxiological, and institutional). We seek to:

- Foster rigorous analysis to establish the contours of this emerging field.
- Explore connections with diverse disciplines as they grapple with encounter of persons and traditions in our multi-faith contexts.
- Advance cutting-edge institutional and pedagogical innovation at the intersection of the academy and civic engagement.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Rachel Mikva, Chicago Theological Seminary  
rmikva@ctsichicago.edu
- Feryal Salem, American Islamic College  
fsalem@aicusa.edu

## Islam, Gender, Women Unit

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### Call Text:

The IGW unit postponed its 2020 sessions until the 2021 Annual Meeting. As a result, it is not accepting new proposals at this time.

### Postponed sessions include:

- (Re)Conceptualizing the Field: Scholarship at the Margins of Islam and Gender
- Co-sponsored session with the Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion unit

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Fatima Seedat, University of Cape Town  
fatima.seedat@uct.ac.za
- Saadia Yacoob, Williams College  
saadia.yacoob@williams.edu

## Islamic Mysticism Unit

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### Call Text:

The Islamic Mysticism Group solicits paper and panel proposals for the 2021 AAR Annual Meeting. All proposals related to Islamic mysticism, as described in the above “Statement of Purpose,” are welcome. This Unit encourages proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable discussions in all areas related to Islamic Mysticism, including but not limited to contemporary and classical Sufism, Isma‘ili and broader Shi‘i mysticism, the esoteric and occult arts, aspects of Islamic philosophy and mystical hermeneutics. Proposals must engage with existing scholarship, show theoretical sophistication, and offer original research.

Because of disruptions in the 2020 program, one panel has been deferred to 2021, meaning that the steering committee will have to be more selective than usual this year. Pre-arranged sessions are still a possibility, especially if that session can be shared between two different units. Remember that pre-arranged sessions must show diversity of gender to be considered. We also greatly encourage other forms of diversity, especially race, ethnicity, theoretical method, and rank. Authors of accepted proposals are expected to attend the annual meeting and will be barred from future programs if they fail to show, special and emergency circumstances aside.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Merin Shobhana Xavier, Queen’s University  
merin.shobhana@gmail.com
- Cyrus Zargar, University of Central Florida  
cyzargar@gmail.com

## Jain Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

The Jain Studies Unit will run the roundtable panel accepted for the 2020 AAR AM in 2021 as well as our co-sponsored panel with Hindu Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion units.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- M. Whitney Kelting, Northeastern University  
m.kelting@northeastern.edu
- Steven Vose, Florida International University  
svose@fiu.edu

## Japanese Religions Unit

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### Call Text:

We invite papers sessions, individual papers, and roundtables that address all aspects of Japanese religious practice and thought. Priority is given to paper sessions and roundtables. All time periods welcome. To facilitate exchange within and beyond Japanese religions, we prefer proposals that include explicit reflection on the study of religion. Creative formats are encouraged (film screenings and discussion, pre-circulated papers/texts, workshops, etc.).

Our Unit is committed to diversity and inclusion. We strongly encourage considering balance in terms of gender, and areas of specialization and time periods, as well as balance between graduate students, junior scholars, and senior scholars. Showing little or no regard for such diversity will exercise an adverse effect on the likelihood that your proposal will be accepted.

In submitting proposals, please follow the AAR guidelines carefully. First-timers are encouraged to contact the co-chairs for additional advice (Levi McLaughlin at [lmclaug2@ncsu.edu](mailto:lmclaug2@ncsu.edu) and Jessica Starling at [jstarling@lclark.edu](mailto:jstarling@lclark.edu)).

This year's AAR theme is "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures." Proposals need not be limited to this theme.

The Japanese Religions Unit is allotted three 90 Minute Sessions and one 2 Hour Session. This includes any accepted sessions in co-sponsored program units. Please keep this in mind as you compose your proposal.

We would like to remind you about the Women in the Study of Asian Religions website (<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/find-scholars/>). This website was created to facilitate greater representation of women in scholarly activities by providing a crowdsourced list of female scholars working in Asian Religions. We encourage everybody to use this website to go beyond old networks to seek new ones to help us further strengthen our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Below are possible topics proposed by our members this year. We welcome proposals on other topics as well. Please contact these proposers if you are interested in developing a proposal with them:

Japanese religion in service of the state (Abigail McBain, Columbia, [aim2121@columbia.edu](mailto:aim2121@columbia.edu))

Mountains in relation to death rituals and traditions (Abigail McBain, Columbia, [aim2121@columbia.edu](mailto:aim2121@columbia.edu))

Archaeology of Japanese religions (Jonathan Thumas, Harvard, [jthumas@g.harvard.edu](mailto:jthumas@g.harvard.edu))

Open discussion sessions / pre-circulated paper discussions (Tim Smith, UNC-Chapel Hill, [tjwsmith@live.unc.edu](mailto:tjwsmith@live.unc.edu))

Remoteness, alternative communication, patchwork ethnography (Kaitlyn Ugoretz, UCSB, [kugoretz@ucsb.edu](mailto:kugoretz@ucsb.edu))

Intra-Asian comparison (Barbara Ambros, UNC-Chapel Hill, [bambros@email.unc.edu](mailto:bambros@email.unc.edu))

Religion, poverty, and inequality (2021 conference theme) (Bryan Lowe, Princeton, [bdlowe@princeton.edu](mailto:bdlowe@princeton.edu))

Sacred music in Japan (Michaela Mross, Stanford, [michaelamross@hotmail.com](mailto:michaelamross@hotmail.com))

The role of the grotesque/ugliness and demons in the study of Japanese religions (Emily Simpson, Dartmouth, [Emily.B.Simpson@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Emily.B.Simpson@dartmouth.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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Levi McLaughlin, North Carolina State University  
lmclaug2@ncsu.edu
- Jessica Starling, Lewis and Clark College  
jessie.starling@gmail.com

## Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Unit

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Call Text:

Kierkegaard, Contagion, Class, and Corporeal Vulnerability

The coronavirus pandemic and its simultaneous threats of viral infection, social disruption, and economic collapse call for a reconsideration of the implications of corporeal vulnerability. We invite paper proposals on Kierkegaard's thought in regard to the intersection of contagion, corporeal vulnerability, and economic and social factors. Possible topics to be addressed might include Kierkegaard and the cholera epidemics of the 19th century, which Kierkegaard saw as an edifying pedagogy for selfhood; Kierkegaard on the significance of the body's vulnerability; Kierkegaard on the tension between individuality and the variables of social location, such as class; and Kierkegaard on "the single individual" and the destructive potential of isolation, loneliness, and feelings of abandonment.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Lee Barrett, Lancaster Theological Seminary  
lbarrett@lancasterseminary.edu
- Jennifer Veninga, St. Edwards University  
jennv@stedwards.edu

## Korean Religions Unit

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### Call Text:

The Korean Religions Unit welcomes proposals for papers sessions, roundtable sessions, and individual papers. Proposals in all areas of Korean Religions will be considered. This year, we especially invite submissions to the subtopics proposed by interested AAR members, as listed below. If you would like to contribute to one of the panel proposals below, please contact the organizer(s) directly, and submit your proposal at least two weeks prior to the AAR submission deadline.

### For KRU Standalone panels:

The Experience of Women in Religious Leadership in Korea

Organizer: Eunsu Cho ([escho@snu.ac.kr](mailto:escho@snu.ac.kr))

Religion and Rights and Anti-Rights Advocacy in Korea (Animal rights, refugee rights, Anti-refugee rights, Disability rights, LGBT rights, women rights, Anti-immigration rights, etc.)

Organizer: Tim Lee ([t.lee@tcu.edu](mailto:t.lee@tcu.edu))

Any other papers that address the relationship between Korean Popular Culture and Religion as broadly construed.

For 2021, the Korean Religions Unit will hold postponed panels from 2020.

Co-sponsored with the Religion and Popular Culture Unit:

Korean Popular Culture and Religion

Organizers: Minjung Noh ([tuf64799@temple.edu](mailto:tuf64799@temple.edu)); Hyemin Na ([hyemin.na@gmail.com](mailto:hyemin.na@gmail.com))

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Hwansoo Kim, Yale University  
hwansoo.kim@yale.edu
- Liora Sarfati, Tel Aviv University  
lsarfati@tauex.tau.ac.il

## Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit

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Call Text:

We solicit papers in the following 4 areas of study...

• Together, the Religion & Ecology and Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Units invite papers engaging ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and ecofeminismo from religious, indigenous or theological perspectives. Rooted in both independent and overlapping streams of influence, ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and ecofeminismo are reemerging with renewed interest, energy, and relevance. In light of amplifying calls for decolonization, anti-racism, climate justice and gender justice, it is increasingly clear why we must insist on intersectional analysis. Papers' proposals might include, but are not limited to, the intersections of gender, race, class, nature, species, and religion. Presentations may address these topics broadly, or they may consider the following questions:

1. In what ways have current environmental and climate justice issues challenged ecowomanism, ecofeminism, or ecofeminismo?
2. What important contributions have religion, spirituality, or indigenous lifeways made to the development of ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and/or ecofeminismo? Why do commonly expressed accusations of essentialism and/or universalism towards ecofeminism persist?
3. What unique insights do these perspectives bring to analyzing and protesting police brutality, colonialism, and/or exploitative extraction?
4. What blindspots of exclusion or privilege persist in recent expressions of ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and/or ecofeminismo?
5. Proposals that highlight current ground-level movements or important actors, such as Berta Caceres, are especially welcome.

Co-sponsored session

Title: Fifty years of Teología de la Liberación – Examining Gustavo Gutiérrez's influence and the task of the liberation of theology

(co-sponsored roundtable by Black Theology Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, Liberation Theologies Unit, Religion and Economy Unit, Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit, Roman Catholic Studies Unit, and Vatican II Studies Unit)

Description: In 1971 Gustavo Gutiérrez published the article "Hacia Una Teología de la Liberación", followed by one of the most influential books of the 20th century, *Teología de la Liberación: Perspectivas*. To mark this year of celebrations, reflections, and conversations on this important anniversary we invite proposals that creatively engage Gutiérrez's work from a variety of interdisciplinary lenses and contexts. We especially invite proposals that bring Gutiérrez's contributions in contact with current challenges and future visions of the liberation of theology and theologies that seek to liberate, including problematizing the meaning(s) and praxis of liberation across the theological disciplines.

- In this co-sponsored session titled *Off this Border Called My Back: Towards a New Politics of Solidarity the Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society and the Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion* program units invite proposals that constructively engage the legacy of the queer Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa (1942-2004). Anzaldúa's work grapples with the legacies of colonial violence and seeks to deconstruct oppressive gender norms. She invites readers to explore these critical questions by tapping into their body as a source of sacred knowledge. Drawing from various fields, Anzaldúa's scholarship represents an intersectional approach that, we believe, can guide our cross-disciplinary conversations and critical interventions as scholars of religion. Reflecting on Anzaldúa's corpus, we invite proposals that address one of the following questions:
  1. In what ways can Anzaldúa inform the contemporary study of religion in light of the economic, environmental, technological, or geopolitical challenges of the 21st century?
  2. How can Anzaldúa's legacy help scholars, activists, and practitioners envision and enact networks of belonging?
  3. What intellectual or political role should feminists of color play in the academy and/or in society at large in a post-Trump era?
  4. How can Anzaldúa's critical thought inform our understanding of social protests?
  5. What insights can we glean from Anzaldúa's work to address issues of poverty and other social justice concerns?
  6. Given that religious texts, practices and ethical debates can function both to encourage individuals and/or governments in redressing social inequality and to justify a stance of ignoring it, how might we as scholars of religion draw on Anzaldúa to communicate the role of religion in shaping the public sphere?
 Papers can focus on, but are not limited to, the following themes: decolonial aesthetics, borderlands, epistemology, sexuality, or spirituality.

- Our unit invites papers that highlight Latina/o/x community-based groups whose work in some way addresses religion, poverty and social inequality for the communities they reach. Over the past several years, the field of Latina/o religion has experienced growth methodologically, owing in large part to the increase of ethnographic scholarship, oral history, and art. This panel will offer scholars in the field a forum to reflect on ethnographic scholarship with Latina/o/x community partners, with particular attention to how direct engagement with organizers/activists impacts research questions and outcomes. What insights does one glean from working with minoritized ethnic and religious communities? How does fieldwork with communities expand definitions of Latinidad? We especially encourage scholars who have performed work with communities in Texas or the greater Southwest.

Mission Statement:

This Unit examines, through systematic study and reflection, the social locations, religious beliefs, and practices of the rich and diverse multicultural backgrounds of Latinas/os in the United States and Canada. The Unit recognizes that this is an interdisciplinary enterprise in view of the cultural and religious roots and sources of Latinos/as, including heritages from Europe, indigenous nations of the Americas, Africa,

and Asia. The traditions emerging out of the mixture of these cultures throughout the Americas continue to undergo further development and innovation in the North American context, producing the distinct phenomena of Latino/a theologies and religions. It is this rich and deep religious/theological-cultural-social-political complex that is the focus of this Unit.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Ángel Gallardo, Southern Methodist University  
ajgallardo@smu.edu
- Lauren Frances Guerra, Loyola Marymount University  
laurenguerra18@gmail.com

## Law, Religion, and Culture Unit

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### Call Text:

As always, the Law, Religion, and Culture Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtable panel proposals, including author-meets-critics 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 related to the conference location and theme Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures.

**Borderlands, Sovereignty, and Migration:** Questions regarding sovereignty, land, walls, cages, criminal justice, and law enforcement have dominated headlines. We seek papers investigating the various ways religion and law intersect in the lived experiences of people on all sides of these complicated cultural issues.

**COVID-19 and Religious Freedom and Social Justice:** Individuals interpreted the pandemic in many ways. For some, the health and social restrictions and pressure to vaccinate were an infringement on their religious freedom. They sought recourse both in and outside the courts. For other religious communities, their observation of the inequity sparked engagement with (or negotiation around) bureaucratic systems to do what was not happening (remember the long lines of hungry people in San Antonio last September). We seek papers that provide insight into the many ways COVID-19 impacted religion, law, and people during the pandemic.

**Climate Change and Environmentalism:** Climate change effects poor populations disproportionately. Our unit is interested in various efforts around the world to combat climate change involving religion, law, and culture. For example, recent global wave of granting legal personhood to non-humans (waterways, trees, animals).

**Religion and Race:** Our unit invites papers interrogating the role of religion, race, and law in the following (but not limited to) the Black Lives Matter Movement, White Nationalists movements, the Border Wall advocacy, the Muslim Ban Executive Order.

For possible co-sponsorship with the New Religious Movements section: on the use of anti-cult terminology and language to prosecute and adjudicate fringe religious groups, specifically, such as NXIVM, the Church of Body Modification, and the Church of Marijuana, and religious traditions, in general.

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Spencer Dew, The Ohio State University / Wittenberg University  
spencerdew@gmail.com
- Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand, Middle Tennessee State University  
jenna.gray-hildenbrand@mtsu.edu

## Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

Marcella Althaus-Reid's works, *Indecent Theology* (2000) and *The Queer God* (2003), theoretically and theologically consider the relations of poverty and capitalism, of sexuality and the AIDS crisis, and of histories of place and domination. Althaus-Reid's insights into community, queerness, resistance, and care are grounded in her own place as a Christian theologian. This call offers Althaus-Reid's work as a starting point for inquiring about other relationships and histories that structure our current global pandemic. We invite paper proposals that explore spaces where 'religion' (broadly conceived) and its varied practices intersect with sexuality, gender, race, geography, and non/institutionalized power dynamics as inseparable from public health crises. Who has suffered under capitalism's machinery that exploits essential workers and unequally distributes medical resources, and what are the responsibilities of religious communities? What have technologies of pathologization and bioethics contributed to or challenged the use of what Alison Kafer terms "Feminist, Queer, Crip" theory (2013) in religious studies? Under-represented scholars and scholarship that advances people of color, persons with disabilities, decoloniality, and economic justice are encouraged to submit proposals.

A possible co-sponsorship with the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion unit that invites papers investigating what lesbian-feminisms might contribute to ethnographic methodologies, especially when investigating poor, queer subjectivity. Some examples would include Matt Brim's 2020 book *Poor Queer Studies: Confronting Elitism in the University* and Casey Golomski's 2020 article "Countermythologies."

In this co-sponsored session titled *Off this Border Called My Back: Towards a New Politics of Solidarity the Latina/a Religion, Culture, and Society and the Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion* program units invite proposals that constructively engage the legacy of the queer Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa (1942-2004). Anzaldúa's work grapples with the legacies of colonial violence and seeks to deconstruct oppressive gender norms. She invites readers to explore these critical questions by tapping into their body as a source of sacred knowledge. Drawing from various fields, Anzaldúa's scholarship represents an intersectional approach that, we believe, can guide our cross-disciplinary conversations and critical interventions as scholars of religion. Reflecting on Anzaldúa's corpus, we invite proposals that address one of the following questions:

1. In what ways can Anzaldúa inform the contemporary study of religion in light of the economic, environmental, technological, or geopolitical challenges of the 21st century?
2. How can Anzaldúa's legacy help scholars, activists, and practitioners envision and enact networks of belonging?
3. What intellectual or political role should feminists of color play in the academy and/or in society at large in a post-Trump era?

4. How can Anzaldúa's critical thought inform our understanding of social protests?
5. What insights can we glean from Anzaldúa's work to address issues of poverty and other social justice concerns?
6. Given that religious texts, practices and ethical debates can function both to encourage individuals and/or governments in redressing social inequality and to justify a stance of ignoring it, how might we as scholars of religion draw on Anzaldúa to communicate the role of religion in shaping the public sphere?

Papers can focus on, but are not limited to, the following themes: decolonial aesthetics, borderlands, epistemology, sexuality, or spirituality.

#### Mission Statement:

For over 25 years this unit has been committed to lesbian-feminism in the study of religion. 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. We are especially committed to scholars and scholarship that advance people of color, persons with disabilities, decoloniality, and economic justice. This is accomplished with diverse and timely themes, and by providing a theoretical space for probing and further developing the openings and opportunities afforded by changing sociopolitical and theoretical contexts.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Sarah Bloesch, University of North Carolina At Chapel Hill  
sbloesch@smu.edu
- Michelle Wolff, Augustana College  
michellewolff@augustana.edu

## Liberation Theologies Unit

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Call Text:

2021, San Antonio TX

Session 1 (2 hours)

Title: "Coloniality, Poverty, Liberations"

[This would be one of two possible stand-alone sessions (depending on proposal submissions)]

Description: Conscious of the theme of the 2021 AAR meeting, "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures", and of the meeting's location in San Antonio, the Liberation Theologies Unit invites proposals for a session engaging Coloniality, Poverty, Liberations. We aspire for this session to advance the central question in our Statement of Purpose, "What does liberation theology mean in and for the twenty-first century?" as we enter its third decade.

Proposals are encouraged that consider:

What does it mean to imagine liberation(s) that take into account massive economic progress that leaves behind, impoverishes and does violence to countless communities around the world?

How do we make sense of new forms of colonialism?

What tools best equip communities, institutions, popular movements, governments to build resistance while promoting the human project?

Who is charged with defining this vision and under what authority?

Topics/themes may include:

Coloniality of the poor in liberation theologies

Coloniality of class

The Future as multiple

Theological confrontations to inequality

Liberalism, gender, race, and violence

Who and Where are "the poor"

Conversations on wealth and the enduring nature of empire

Religious identity/values and the criminalization of poverty

Liberations, Social Gospel, and Neoliberal Ideals of Prosperity

Environmental/Economic/Social/Cultural/Political poverty and the movements of peoples

Session 2 (2 hours)

Title: Fifty years of Teología de la Liberación – Examining Gustavo Gutiérrez's influence and the task of the liberation of theology

(co-sponsored by Black Theology Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, Latina/o

Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, Liberation Theologies Unit, and Religion and

Economy Unit, Religion in the Latina/o Americas Unit, Roman Catholic Studies Unit,

Vatican II Studies Unit)

Description: In 1971 Gustavo Gutiérrez published the article “Hacia Una Teología de la Liberación”, followed by one of the most influential books of the 20th century, *Teología de la Liberación: Perspectivas*. To mark this year of celebrations, reflections, and conversations on this important anniversary we invite proposals that creatively engage Gutiérrez’s work, from a variety of interdisciplinary lenses and contexts. We especially invite proposals that bring Gutiérrez’s contributions in contact with current challenges and future visions of the liberation of theology and theologies that seek to liberate, including problematizing the meaning(s) and praxis of liberation across the theological disciplines.

Co-sponsored session with Schleiermacher Unit

Title: Reconsidering Christ, Sin, and Atonement

Description: Schleiermacher’s theology turns on the central relation to Christ as redeemer, yet he also maintains that understandings of Christ and atonement must continue to develop in light of new questions and challenges. Together with the 2021 AAR Annual Meeting theme of religion, poverty, and inequality, we invite proposals that consider fresh approaches to christology, atonement theory, and sin and redemption. We especially welcome perspectives that attend to pressing challenges of systemic poverty, racial and gender inequality, and classism. For example, proposals might:

- examine social, structural, and cultural dimensions of sin
- develop liberationist theological perspectives on sin and redemption
- consider the critical interplay of race, christology, and Christian identity
- consider postcolonial theological reflections on christology and supersessionism
- constructively and/or critically engage Schleiermacher’s work on Christ, sin, and redemption

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Thia Cooper, Gustavus Adolphus College  
tcooper@gac.edu
- Maria T. Davila, Merrimack College  
mariatdavila@gmail.com

## Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit

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Call Text:

### I. Captive Consciences and Decolonizing Global Lutheran Traditions

In 1521 Luther was summoned to appear before the Diet of Worms as an excommunicated priest and doctor of the church. In defiance to ruling powers, he refused to recant his writings, in accord with a conscience captive to the Word of God; and this has been marked by some as the birth of modern era. Despite many social advancements, this has also been an age wherein we have seen the devastating and ongoing effects of the reach of colonialism and global capitalism. What are consciences captive to the word of God to do in such a time as this?

For this session we invite papers engaging post-colonial, feminist, anti-racist, intersectional, and liberationist methodologies (among others) in order to discern how a global and migrating Luther invites us to take a stand in the face of oppressive forces. We especially are interested in discerning how Lutheranism is taking shape on the ground in contesting such oppressive forces as poverty, racism, sexism, and heterosexism. How does protest emerge in a religious tradition both accused of quietism and credited, in part, with the creation of the welfare state in Northern Europe or grassroots diaconal initiatives in Latin America?

In addition to papers addressing this theme, we welcome proposals that are germane to the topic of Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions.

### II. Global Lutheranism in an Era of Virtual Communion

In the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, ecclesial and civic activities from teaching to learning, pastoral care to worship, social gathering to work, shifted to virtual mediums. Intersecting crises intensified and exacerbated existing social inequalities and injustices. And digital communication tools raised awareness of the difficulties of housing, work, medicine, movements for social justice, various movements for societal reform, and political campaigning.

It has long been recognized that innovating technologies played a role in the communication, distribution, politics, and reception of Reformation messages. Commonly, the Guttenberg printing press is cited as having a democratizing impact that corresponded with the Biblical hermeneutical democratization of the Reformers. In the case of the pandemic, the sudden reliance on (sometimes costly) technologies for continued access to social connection, communion, education, and means for employment has exacerbated, in some circumstances, rather than equalized existing global and socio-economic inequalities. In other contexts, reliance on these technologies improved access to theological education or conversations beyond what was previously locally available.

In her book, *The Virtual Body of Christ for a Suffering World*, Deanna Thompson notes that, "It is not overstating the case to say that digital means of communication are revolutionizing the way humans interact with one another as well as how we produce knowledge." In light of the pandemic, its effects, and new engagement with digital technology, the MLGLT unit invites paper and panel proposals on the intersection of

global Lutheran theologies and Lutheranism with new understandings of embodiment, the virtual, digital communication, church, and real presence. Proposals could include but are not limited to:

- innovative pedagogical, liturgical, pastoral, and theological solutions to the challenges of physical isolation
- social media and a new democratization of the church
- inequalities or new accessibilities unveiled by technological access among global communions and international student bodies
- reflections on the limits and possibilities of virtual communion, as well as ways in which ecclesiology and “the church” might be freshly understood or defined
- new revelations, applications, or reflections during the global pandemic on the overlaps and differences between real, virtual, and embodied presence
- theological or other engagements with material-technological changes in society in the wake of the pandemic such as social distancing, mask-wearing, etc.

### III. Interrogating Luther’s Biographers

The 500th marking of the German Reformation in 2017 also marked an increase in scholarly biographies and historiographies reconceptualizing Martin Luther. Recent projects by Scott Hendrix, Lyndal Roper, and Andrew Pettegree, for example, reframe Luther in new theological, psychological, historical, and political contexts. For this potential co-sponsored session, the History of Christianity Unit invites papers and panel proposals that interrogate Luther’s recent biographers and historiographers. What new consensuses have emerged? What approaches are privileged in the recent rejuvenation of Luther scholarship? What themes and trends become central for Luther’s biographers? What new insights do these texts offer into Luther’s theology, either in its historical context or for constructive theological reflection today? How do contemporary ethical perspectives reshape scholarly approaches to Luther’s biography?

#### 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Jacob Erickson, Trinity College, Dublin  
jacobjerickson@gmail.com
- Kristen E. Kvam, Saint Paul School of Theology  
kriskvam@spst.edu

## Men, Masculinities, and Religions Unit

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### Call Text:

#### Bodies, Materiality, & Religion:

The Men, Masculinities & Religion Unit calls for papers that explore religion, masculinities, and bodies through the lenses of materiality, and embodiment: flesh, skin, fluids, bone, food and nourishment, clothing, adornment, relics, tattoos, and organs. We seek papers that think about sensation, touch, affect, and the relationship between bodies and objects.

We are especially interested in a pre-arranged book panel or roundtable on new books in men and masculinities studies/gender studies that think about embodiment and materiality, including Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada's *Lifeblood of the Parish: Men and Catholic Devotion in Williamsburg, Brooklyn* (NYU Press, 2020), Michael Muhammad's *Knight's, Muhammad's Body: Baraka Networks and the Prophetic Assemblage* (UNC Press, 2020), and other new books in the field for panel discussion and critique. We seek proposals that: highlight these and other recently published books, explore their theoretical and methodological interventions, and offer ways to engage pedagogically with them and incorporate them into the classroom. We especially invite proposals that think creatively or in novel ways about the book panel format and that draw from diverse subfields, traditions, and global perspectives.

#### Rethinking Theory, Reimagining Masculinities:

The Men, Masculinities & Religion Unit seeks papers that revisit, rethink, revise, and reimagine the theoretical toolkit and frameworks of men and masculinities studies. Papers can consider how ethnographic, historical, or other methodologies and sources challenge, complicate, or complement existing theories like R.W. Connell's hegemonic masculinity, feminist masculinities, theories of homosociality, etc. We seek papers that consider the role religion and race, nation, sexuality, and class play in the construction, the renegotiation, or the challenging of hegemonic masculinities. We are especially interested in responses from diverse traditions and geographic locations.

#### 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.

#### Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Linda G. Jones, University of Pompeu Fabra  
linda.jones@upf.edu
- Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada, Kalamazoo College  
amaldona@kzoo.edu

## Middle Eastern Christianity Unit

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### Call Text:

The M.E. Christianity unit welcomes proposals on the following topics from all academic fields of study (sociology, psychology, history, literary theory, ritual studies, etc.) as they are applied to Middle Eastern Christians in any of their communities throughout history, whether in their native lands, or as immigrants throughout the world.

Successful proposals must present a clear thesis, explain the theoretical and methodological approaches of the research, and identify a specific body of evidence that the research will interpret. The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit encourages and promotes the inclusion of all scholarly voices, and invites proposals from scholars of all ethnic/national backgrounds, genders, professional ranks, disciplinary perspectives, and life circumstances.

### Middle Eastern Christianity, Poverty, and Inequality

The Middle Eastern Christianity unit is soliciting papers addressing the 2021 AAR annual meeting theme “Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating our Collective Futures.” We welcome papers on any period of history that examine how marginalized individuals or groups have collaborated in response to situations of poverty or inequality. Papers addressing grassroots forms of intra-Christian or interreligious collaboration (such as social protests, women’s movements, liberationist movements, or youth partnerships) are particularly welcome.

### Middle Eastern Christianity and Pluralism

The Middle Eastern Christianity unit invites paper proposals addressing the topic of pluralism as it relates to Middle Eastern Christians. The topic is broadly conceived to include different aspects of and approaches to pluralism in intercommunal, interreligious, legal, political, and/or socio-cultural contexts.

### Borders, Boundaries, and Borderlands in Middle Eastern Christianity (co-sponsored)

The Middle Eastern Christianity unit, in collaboration with the Anthropology of Religion Unit, is soliciting papers addressing the theme of borders, boundaries, and borderlands. Papers should consider contestations of space and religiosity related to the nation-state or other spaces variously conceived, including the creation or contestation of sacred space in diaspora settings and the use of religious art and music to mark communal boundaries. Priority will be given to papers addressing this theme from an anthropological perspective.

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Mourad Takawi, University of the Incarnate Word  
mtakawi@gmail.com
- Deanna Womack, Emory University  
[deanna.f.womack@emory.edu](mailto:deanna.f.womack@emory.edu)

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

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Call Text:

For the 2021 AAR Annual Meeting, we invite papers or complete panels on:

Moral Injury for health-care workers: while some studies about moral injury in the medical field have been produced before the pandemic, COVID-19 has exacerbated and brought to the larger public the struggles of health care workers. What has been learned in almost two years of the pandemic? What questions remain vital?

Moral Injury and hospital chaplains in the COVID-19 pandemic: What has been the role of chaplains in helping patients, their families, and medical personnel cope with the many forms of moral injury inflicted by the pandemic? What has been learned through the challenges of the last two years? How are chaplains dealing with their own moral injury?

Understanding moral injury beyond a veteran issue: How did the work in different disciplines of the last decades help us understand the complexity and possible boundaries of moral injury? What are the limits of moral injury? Are there experiences, roles, contexts where moral injury as a term may be problematic? What is moral about moral injury? What and who is injured in moral injury? How do race, class, gender, culture, etc., affect one's experience of moral injury and repair? What are other ways to describe similar experiences?

Moral Injury, Peace Studies, and Restorative/Transformative Justice: how has the concept of moral injury been engaged in these fields? What insights, challenges and questions do they have to offer to moral injury scholars?

Moral injury and the anthropocene: is moral injury an important concept for the current and upcoming traumas and changes that are and will be created by the anthropocene and climate change?

Moral injury and racial disparity in health care: Dr. Susan Moore's death during the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed publicly the degree to which Black people are suffering from medical racism, as Indigenous and People of Color are as well. How does the concept of moral injury help express and address the systemic devaluing of Black lives within the US medical system, in every phase of one's life?

In connection with AAR Presidential theme for 2021, "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures," we invite proposals on Moral Injury and Economic Inequality. How is the economic injustice embedded in capitalism the source of moral injury for people that participate in this system of exploitation, as victims, perpetrators, and often as both? Can addressing moral injury in relation to economic injustice leverage social transformation as an inescapable part of healing? What is moral injury for poverty scholars?

Co-Sponsored with the Psychology, Culture, Religion Unit:

What Do We Mean by the Word "Trauma"? An Interdisciplinary Exploration The word "trauma" has accrued different meanings in various disciplinary contexts, with a more rapid accrual of meanings in recent years as trauma has been studied alongside related and often overlapping concepts (injury, harm, wounding, etc.). Theologians and ethicists, literary theorists, sociologists, psychoanalysts, and pastoral caregivers all engage trauma but do they mean the same thing? Definitions seem to be broader or narrower depending on whether one takes a theoretical or a clinical approach. Clinicians may use the term more specifically than theologians or ethicists. Writing on moral injury, post-traumatic growth, and trauma studies reveals multiple definitions as well, in addition to the DSM 5. This session addresses the question of what we mean by the word "trauma" and what does it matter?

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
- The roles of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class, race, and other forms of oppression in relation to personal agency and theories of ethics.

Method of Submission: INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Gabriella Lettini, Starr King School- GTU  
glettini@sksm.edu
- Michael Yandell, Emory University  
m.yandell@me.com

## 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. We are also interested in papers that reflect on the globalization of Mormonism.

For 2021, in addition to a general call for papers addressing Mormonism, we are seeking papers on one of two themes: "Mormon Imaginaries," which would cover a wide variety of topics, including but not limited to futurism, historical accounts, pluralisms, science fiction, biopolitics, and so on; second, papers that would engage with Latin America and/or Latinx/a/o communities.

In addition, the Mormon Studies Unit also plans a cosponsored session with the Religion, Medicines, and Healing Unit. This session seeks papers that examine the interrelated themes of both units by exploring medicine and healing in the Mormon tradition (broadly defined) from a variety of methodological approaches and historical eras. We especially appreciate papers that can connect their topics to lived traditions and practices among Mormons, past or present.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE, 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)

### Chairs:

- Sara Patterson, Hanover College  
patterson@hanover.edu
- Taylor Petrey, Kalamazoo College  
tpetrey@kzoo.edu

## Music and Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

We welcome paper and panel proposals on all subjects that relate music to religion. The section is eager to cultivate scholarship in music and religion from a wide array of religions, time periods, and cultural practices. To that end, for the 2021 meeting in San Antonio, we are particularly seeking

1. The Music and Religion section is perpetually interested in panels that combine performance and scholarly reflection, and/or book panel discussions that help to advance the field. These ideas can be incorporated into any of the other ideas below.
2. Religion, Music, Law and Outlaws – Music and incarceration, exploitation of “bad boy” roles, ethical questions in “outlaw” music, oppositional musical stances in regard to religion,
3. Music and Poverty, related to the 2021 Conference Theme, "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures" – considering access to music, music-making and musical instruments in conditions of poverty and structural racism, and how religious institutions ameliorate or exacerbate these conditions; how does food insecurity shape musical lives; music in public housing; it is also the 50th anniversary of Elvis Presley’s birthplace being turned into a museum in Tupelo (<https://elvispresleybirthplace.com/>)
4. Myth-making processes in popular music: Selena, Tupac, Elvis, etc.
5. Shape-note singing – It is the 200th anniversary of Ananias Davisson’s Kentucky Harmony
6. Representations of religion in opera, with a particular look at orientalism and racial discourses (it is 150 years since the premier of Verdi’s Aïda)
7. East African forms of Christianity and ancient East African religions (e.g. Kemet)
8. Sacred music of Stravinsky
9. James Weldon Johnson’s “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing”
10. Mahavishnu Orchestra – The Inner Mounting Flame (album) 50th anniversary
11. Spiritual discourses around late Beethoven
12. American Transcendentalist ideas in 20th century American art music – Ives, Ruggles, Cowell
13. Non-Western musics, particularly Native American, South Asian, East Asian, Australian, and African, either contemporary or historical
14. Topics not covered herein are also acceptable, provided they are directly related to music and religion

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Alisha L. Jones, Indiana University  
[jonesall@indiana.edu](mailto:jonesall@indiana.edu)
- Jennifer Rycenga, San Jose State University  
[jennifer.rycenga@sjsu.edu](mailto:jennifer.rycenga@sjsu.edu)

## Mysticism Unit

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### Call Text:

- (1) **Mysticism and Humor:** This session seeks proposals on the role of humor and comedy in any aspect of mystic practice, tradition, or experience.
- (2) **Mysticism and Unruly Desire:** We welcome papers that explore the role of desire and its objects in mystical discourse and practice, with particular attention to desires that are not routinized or heteronormative. We particularly welcome papers that explore a contemporary perspective and/or use an empirical approach. (for a possible co-sponsorship with the Religion and Sexuality Unit)
- (3) **Mysticism and Entheogens:** Given the global "psychedelic renaissance" which is largely oriented around entheogens, this session seeks proposals on the role of entheogens with regard to the origins of not only religious/mystical experience, but also of religions as a whole.
- (4) **Mysticism, Poverty, and Social Justice:** Mystic traditions are often characterized by a dismissive attitude toward material wealth: spiritual concerns are taken to be superior, and possibly mutually exclusive, to material concerns. This session therefore seeks proposals that consider the implications of this disposition on the part of mystic traditions regarding poverty and inequality.
- (5) **Aural & Visual Epistemologies in Mysticism:** Mystic traditions often have much to say about the intellect, as either an essential tool or primary hindrance of mystic practice, but what of alternative epistemologies that privilege affect and the senses? This session requests submissions that examine non-intellective epistemologies and their role in mysticism.

### 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 Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/aarmysticism/>.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

We do not accept proposals by email.

Chairs:

- Jason N. Blum, Davidson College  
jnblum09@gmail.com
- Margarita Simon Guillory, Boston University  
mlsg@bu.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). In particular, we invite papers on the following topics:

In light of this year's theme "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures," we invite papers on issues related to social and economic justice among Native American communities, including settler colonialism, how it operates and structurally divides resources; definitions of wealth and poverty within Indigenous communities; feast economies and Indigenous feasting traditions; and the impacts of borders and the border wall on Native communities and access to resources.

Papers are also welcome that explore the impacts of and responses to COVID-19 or other pandemics, with emphasis on Indigenous communities, grieving, resiliency, and healing.

For a possible joint session with the Religion and Cities Group, we invite papers focusing on Indigenous communities in urban spaces, their diversity, resiliency, and creativity. Of particular interest are papers exploring the unique challenges Indigenous peoples face protecting the sacred (burial grounds, ceremonial spaces, water, etc.) within urban contexts.

We also invite papers for a possible joint-session with the Religion and Human Rights unit and the Indigenous Religious Traditions unit titled "Indigenous Religions, Rights, and Borders." This session will concern Indigenous rights across borders, land repatriation, religious freedom, and the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous People. Any papers on these topics will be considered. Given the location of the Annual Meeting in San Antonio, we especially encourage papers that explore the southern border of the U.S., rights and critiques of rights from Native American perspectives, and mythologies about colonial expansion in the Southwest.

In conjunction with the Catholic Studies unit, we seek proposals that explore the way Native communities in the Americas have been shaped by, engaged with, resisted and/or indigenized Catholicism. Proposals might include analysis of indigenous Catholic practices, including memorialization, ritual, protest, education, and family life. We likewise welcome proposals that shed light on the borders between indigenous communities and their non-indigenous contemporaries, as these borders have been defined in conversation with Catholicism.

Of interest as well are papers addressing pedagogical strategies for teaching place-based religious traditions in an on-line learning environment.

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Suzanne J. Crawford O'Brien, Pacific Lutheran University  
crawfosj@plu.edu
- Andrea McComb Sanchez, University of Arizona  
amccomb@email.arizona.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 marginal, emergent, “alternative,” innovative, “invented,” or minority religions. In particular, we encourage submissions on the topics:

- Examining the popular re-emergence and rhetorical deployment of terms like “cult,” “charisma,” and “brainwashing”
  - New religious movements engaged in charity, disaster relief, and social justice, thinking in particular about whether charity can be treated/cast as “transgressive” depending upon who undertakes it
  - New religious movements and climate change
  - Child welfare, parenting, and new religious movements
  - African Christian denominations, especially as these denominations are established on other continents.
- 
- A possible co-sponsored session with the Law, Religion, and Culture Unit on the use of anti-cult terminology and language to prosecute and adjudicate fringe religious groups, specifically, such as NXIVM, the Church of Body Modification, and the Church of Marijuana, and religious traditions, in general

We are especially interested in papers that forefront concerns of race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability within these topics.

Note: New Religious Movements is particularly interested in proposals for full panels, but strongly encourages scholars to familiarize themselves with existent NRM scholarship while preparing their proposals. We also expect that the composition of proposed panels will reflect the lived diversity of the Academy. When preparing your proposal, please include the demographic data you provide to the AAR and explain how your panel's participants instantiate academic diversity.

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

We, the Steering Committee of the New Religious Movements Program Unit, affirm our solidarity with the Muslim scholars of the American Academy of Religion and the Society

for Biblical Literature, with Muslim Americans, and with those seeking refuge and asylum in the United States.

As scholars of minority, alternative, and new religions, we are deeply aware of the challenges facing those on America's religious margins. We know the immense human toll such intolerance causes. Our scholarship also demonstrates the violence and tragedy than can result when federal and state agencies fail to recognize the humanity of marginalized religious groups.

We condemn in the strongest terms Mr. Trump's executive order purporting to "protect the American People from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals".

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/us/politics/refugee-muslim-executive-...>

We reject the premise that punitive exclusions of any religious group based on the actions of extremist members make any American safer or freer. We affirm the commitments of our country's first president, who saw in our nation the promise of a government "which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

Cognizant of increased travel and personal safety concerns, we are further committed to offering scholars video conferencing options as an alternative means of participation on all New Religious Movements panels at the American Academy of Religion's national meeting and in the future, should similar needs arise.

We are resolved to make space for difference both within the academy and beyond.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Joseph Laycock, Texas State University  
joe.laycock@gmail.com
- Lydia Willsky-Ciollo, Fairfield University  
lciollo@fairfield.edu

## Nineteenth Century Theology Unit

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### Call Text:

We postponed two of the sessions, originally planned for the 2020 meeting in Boston, until the 2021 annual meeting in San Antonio. They are:

Author Meets Critics: Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Fathers Refounded: Protestant Liberalism, Roman*

*Catholic Modernism, and the Teaching of Ancient Christianity in Early Twentieth-Century America*

(University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019). This is an invited panel of scholars.

Academic Rivalry in the Modern Age: Thinking with Girard and Beyond (a co-sponsored session with the Colloquium on Violence & Religion). The papers for this session were selected last year.

Our new call for proposals takes up the AAR 2021 presidential theme (Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures).

### Theological Responses to Poverty and Inequality in the 19th Century

Papers that address this topic can cover any theological tradition or geographical area.

They will consider such questions as: How have religious doctrines shaped the perception of poverty and inequality? And, what doctrinal shifts occurred in response to social phenomena like the conditions of labor for the new industrial poor and the struggles to extend the franchise? We also welcome papers that cover critiques of religion that arose out of engagement with poverty and inequality. We will accept papers on socially and politically oriented religious movements and programs as long as the focus is on the theological positions underpinning them.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE, E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail), Other  
We ask that all accepted papers be submitted to the AAR's Full-Paper Submission program by November 1. We have found that pre-circulated papers improve the quality of our sessions. Our regular attendees expect to read the papers before the meeting. Presenters will give 15-20-minute summaries of their papers during their session.

### Chairs:

- Sheila Briggs, University of Southern California  
sbriggs@usc.edu
- Zachary Purvis, University of Göttingen  
zackpurvis@gmail.com

## North American Hinduism Unit

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### Call Text:

1) Responses to Indian Politics in North America. Contact: Shana Sippy, [shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu)

The North American Hinduism unit sees papers that address diasporic reactions to coteremporary Indian politics. Potential topics include but are not limited to recent court rulings and political rhetoric concerning Jammu and Kashmir, Babri Masjid/Ramjanambhumi Supreme Court Decision, the Sabarimala verdict, Penal code 377, and the Citizen Amendment Bill.

2) Dalit Identities and Caste in North America. Contacts: Sailaja Krishnamurti, [Sailaja.Krishnamurti@smu.ca](mailto:Sailaja.Krishnamurti@smu.ca) & Shana Sippy, [shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu)

The North American Hinduism unit seeks papers that attend to Dalit identities and the complex relationship between caste and Hinduism in North America.

3) Hinduism in American Politics. Contact: Tanisha Ramachandran, [ramacht@wfu.edu](mailto:ramacht@wfu.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit seeks papers that examine the role of Hindus and Hinduism in American politics. Suggested topics include the election of Kamala Harris, Tulsi Gabbard and expressions of Hinduism; the nominations of Hindu Americans to judicial roles, enacted rituals and recognition of Hindu festivals and rituals in the political sphere, and the role of organized Hindu groups in political campaigns.

4) Yoga and Whiteness Contact: Dheepa Sundaram, [Dheepa.Sundaram@du.edu](mailto:Dheepa.Sundaram@du.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit seek papers for a round table on yoga and whiteness. Generally speaking, this roundtable will foster a discussion on how modern yoga culture in the US fails to interrogate whiteness amidst concerns of authenticity and cultural appropriation. The discussion will address how authenticity politics and assertions of cultural appropriation need to be contextualized through discussions of racism and colonialism while paying attention brahmanical power and Hindu Nationalism.

5) Beyond Apu: The emergence of Hindu characters on American TV. Contact: Prea Persuad, [ppersuad@uncc.edu](mailto:ppersuad@uncc.edu)

The North American Hinduism Unit seeks papers that analyze the representation and depiction of Hinduism and Hindus in/on TV shows such as “Never Ever Have I,” “Indian Match Making” and “American Karma.” Hinduism and Popular Culture.

6) Mytho-political in contemporary North American political and Global contexts. Examination of the ways in which Hindu narratives are deployed in various political arenas Contacts: Moumita Sen, [i.moumita@gmail.com](mailto:i.moumita@gmail.com) & Shana Sippy, [shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu)

7) Hindu Temple Building, Ritual Practices, and Caste in North America. Contact: Amy Allocco, [aallocco@elon.edu](mailto:aallocco@elon.edu))

### 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

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

We encourage people to contact the Chairs advance of submitting proposals if you have any questions or need assistance. We also welcome the possibility of co-sponsored sessions.

Chairs:

- Dheepa Sundaram, University of Denver  
dheepa.sundaram@du.edu
- Shana Sippy, Centre College/Carleton College  
shana@sippys.net

## 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 committed to sponsoring sessions that explore 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 to place them on the conference program. For panel proposals, diversity of rank (including graduate student, post-doctorate, contingent faculty, and junior and senior participants), and gender, race, and ethnicity is strongly encouraged. We especially seek proposals from junior and contingent scholars. 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. Please ensure that all submissions are anonymous.

In addition to the above, we seek proposals on the following topic for our 2021 meeting in San Antonio, Texas:

We especially invite proposals for papers and panels that decenter or problematize the United States as an orienting category for the study of religion in North America, and/or those that critically consider limitations and consequences of studying religion while relying on a US frame of reference. We encourage submissions from scholars who orient their work relative to non-U.S. geographies and political projects, as well as scholars doing work relative to the United States who seek opportunity to think critically about how the U.S. functions as a category in their research.

More specifically, in this vein, we seek:

Papers and panels that consider US or North American religions as they are studied or otherwise engaged from vantage points outside the United States or North America.

Papers and panels that explore the possibilities of a “post-American” study of religion.

Panels and papers that center borderlands, both as geographies and as sites of knowledge production relevant to the study of religion. Given our conference location in San Antonio, we seek work that thinks closely about the U.S.-Mexico border. We also invite work that considers the “U.S. Southwest” and other regions of the United States as a web of borders created by the boundaries of Native reservations. With both senses of

border in mind, we encourage submissions that reflect on religion in relation to life in bordertowns. We seek submissions that think boldly about methods for the study of religion that emerge from and sufficiently respond to such places.

Papers and panels that consider religion relative to the United States as it represents a problem or challenge, for marginalized communities living within its boundaries, as well as global communities effected historically and currently by U.S. empire. We are interested, for example, in papers that consider religion as it exists in relation to efforts of U.S. territories and sovereign “small” nations, in the Caribbean and elsewhere, to negotiate asymmetrical power relations with the United States.

Panels that include participants who bring non-academic forms of expertise, or panels that otherwise experiment with form, in order to interrogate the ways in which norms undergirding the institutional study of religion in North America privilege those of a U.S. academy, and to push imaginatively in new directions.

Mission Statement:

Purpose, Practices & Procedures:

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.

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.

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.

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.

**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.

**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.

**Method of Submission:**

INSPIRE

**Chairs:**

- Kathleen Holscher, University of New Mexico  
kholscher@unm.edu
- Isaac Weiner, Ohio State University  
weiner.141@osu.edu

## Open and Relational Theologies Unit

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### Call Text:

For 2021, we're inviting proposals on the following topics:

-Evangelicals & the Spiritual But Not Religious (vis-à-vis open & relational theologies)

-Nondualism and Panentheism (vis-à-vis comparative theology and open-relational perspectives)

-Feelings, Experience, and God (vis-à-vis affect theology and open-relational perspectives)

-Comparative Nondualisms. Many religions use the term "nondualism" or one of its variations, and nondualism as a concept is occurring more frequently in popular religious discourse, such as the work of Fr. Richard Rohr. But "nondualism" has different meanings in different contexts. In some traditions, the term "nondualism" is synonymous with monism, asserting that only pure unity has ultimate reality. In other traditions, "nondualism" describes an open and relational ontology, offering deep relatedness within real difference. This panel will consider multiple religious perspectives on the concept of nondualism, to plumb the breadth and depth of its potential meaning. Moreover, in accordance with the themes of justice and equality for the 2021 AAR, the panel will consider the sociopolitical implications of nondualism for our current age of division. (co-sponsored with the Comparative Theology Unit)

We especially welcome proposals that connect the above topics with the 2021 presidential theme: Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures.

### Mission Statement:

The Open and Relational Theologies Unit promotes academic research and discourse on open, relational, and process methods and perspectives (including those of open theism, process philosophy, and other relational and personalists traditions). These explorations tend to be constructive in nature--regularly involving theological and philosophical speculation about the nature of God, freedom, power, relationality, love, and more--as well as studying the implications of open-relational methods and perspectives on a wide range of social and scientific topics.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Krista E. Hughes, Newberry College  
kristaehughes@gmail.com
- Wm. Andrew Schwartz, Claremont School of Theology  
andrew@ctr4process.org

## Pentecostal–Charismatic Movements Unit

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### Call Text:

For San Antonio in 2021, the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Unit invites proposals that address questions about the ways in which Pentecostal and Charismatic movements construct an identity either part of or apart from the greater collective and how they have attempted to maintain the boundaries around their identity. We are also interested in papers that examine the development of such identity whether through theological and biblical influences, or as it is influenced by the broader social context.

In regards to the pandemic, we seek papers that explore how Pentecostals have adapted to health and safety orders using both a move to virtual church and outright resistance. We are particularly interested in papers that compare Pentecostal and Charismatic responses to COVID 19 to other diseases and disasters, and we would welcome panels and papers that explore this from a comparative perspective globally.

We welcome papers and panels that explore how Pentecostals and Charismatics relate to the body politic, both in their home countries and transnationally. We look forward to papers or panels that address the interaction of Pentecostals with the larger social context, their identifications with particular political affiliations, and their connection to larger national political structures in the post-2020 election era. We are also interested in examining how laity and leadership embraced or rejected prophecies or conspiracy theories in their attempts to explain such changes. Specific topics of interest also include Pentecostal activism related to abortion, immigration, and religious freedom.

With a hat tip to our Texas location, we are interested in papers that explore these movements in the American Southwest. How has Tejano Pentecostalism influenced the broader Pentecostal community? How do intentional communities like Homestead Heritage maintain ties or practices associated with Pentecostalism? How has Pentecostal and Charismatic history in the region developed from the days Parham-style revivals to the rise of the Southern megachurch?

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Andrea Johnson, California State University, Dominguez Hills  
anjohnson@csudh.edu
- Leah Payne, George Fox University  
lpayne@georgefox.edu

## Philosophy of Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

In order to foster rich, innovative, and challenging intellectual conversations, the Philosophy of Religion Unit is committed to inclusion. Our Unit expects pre-arranged sessions or panel proposals to incorporate diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, and rank.

The steering committee invites proposals on the following topics:

1. Analytic philosophy of religion and race
2. Pluralism, political theology, and philosophy of religion
3. Plagues, solitude, isolation, and social collapse
4. Anti-blackness, philosophy, and religion
5. Whiteness and Buddhist philosophy; Buddhism and race
6. New work on DuBois; papers on DuBois and Weber are also invited
7. The shape and future of philosophy of religion
8. Coloniality, gender, and conceptions of violence
9. Scientific and religious naturalism

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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Thomas A. Lewis, Brown University  
tlewis@brown.edu
- Lori K. Pearson, Carleton College  
lpearson@carleton.edu

## Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit

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### Call Text:

One of the key issues identified within the environmental humanities is the problematic anthropocentric construction of nature within the modern social imaginary. The Platonic tradition has, throughout history, offered a radically non- anthropocentric alternative, understanding meaning and value as intrinsic to creatures themselves. This panel invites papers that explore historical instances of the non-anthropocentric Platonic conceptualisation of nature and encourages contributions that explore their contemporary application to the task of reconceptualising the way we collectively understand nature and our place within it. Papers may draw upon sources from antiquity to the present, and ranging from the philosophical and theological to the poetic and artistic.

*Christian Platonism: Reflections on the occasion of the Publication of Christian Platonism: A History* (Cambridge, 2021) (eds. Alexander J.B. Hampton, John Peter Kenney)  
Possible Co-Sponsored by Religion and Philosophy in Late Antiquity Unit and Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism Unit

On the occasion of the publication of *Christian Platonism: A History* this panel offers papers by established and emergent scholars on one of the determinative narratives of over two millennia of intellectual history. At times, Platonism has constituted an essential philosophical and theological resource, furnishing Christianity with an intellectual framework that has played a key role in its early development, and in subsequent periods of renewal. Alternatively, it has been considered a compromising influence, conflicting with the faith's revelatory foundations and distorting its inherent message. In both cases the fundamental importance of Platonism, as a force which Christianity defined itself by and against, is clear. Contributions will explore the historical conceptual and constructive elements of the relationship between one of history's most influential philosophies and one of its most important religions.

### *Book Panel: Schleiermacher's Plato*

The Schleiermacher Unit will be sponsoring a book panel on the forthcoming volume *Schleiermacher's Plato* (De Gruyter, 2021) by Julia Lamm. This volume considers Friedrich Schleiermacher's historic translation and interpretation of Plato's dialogues, exploring both the impact of Plato's thought in shaping Schleiermacher's theology and the longstanding influence of Schleiermacher's translation upon modern interpretations of Plato. Panelists will be invited. (possible cosponsorship with Schleiermacher Unit)

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Kevin Corrigan, Emory University  
kcorrigan@emory.edu
- Douglas Hedley, University of Cambridge  
rdh26@cam.ac.uk

## Political Theology Unit

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### Call Text:

For 2021, the Political Theology Unit invites proposals on the theme "Mourning Political Theology."

In response to crises such as the covid-19 pandemic, one common response is therapeutic - an attempt at healing that leaves the trauma behind. However, covid makes clear that some losses are indelible, and others require sustained attention if they are truly to heal. Against this background, we invite papers that explore the range of responses required by a crisis like covid, from therapy to mourning (and everything in between). How is mourning mobilized for political-theological purposes? And how might this help us respond to the moment we are living in?

In addition to proposals on this theme, we welcome paper and panel proposals on any topic relating to political theology. Our unit encompasses a wide range of methodologies - including philosophy, politics, theology, history, anthropology, etc. We are particularly interested in submissions that move beyond Christian formulations of political theology.

### Mission Statement:

The Political Theology Unit examines the interaction between religious and political thought: how do they influence one another, and how should we respond?

Political theology emerged as an area of study through the work of scholars such as Carl Schmitt, who examined the origin of political concepts in Christian theology. The area has also drawn upon theological traditions (Christian, Jewish, and otherwise) in order to reflect constructively upon the way in which politics ought to operate. In recent years, political theology has been taken up by scholars in various disciplines, including philosophy of religion, Biblical studies, Islamic studies, African American religion, sexuality and religion, and elsewhere. This program unit draws upon these diverse approaches in order to explore the contribution of political theology to the study of religion.

The Unit aims to expand the conversation about political theology to highlight minority, feminist, and queer voices and to foreground scholars from Jewish, Muslim, and other religious traditions. The goal of the unit is to provide a forum for a diverse group of scholars to explore what political theology means in their own work, how they see the conversation about political theology developing, and how political theology can enrich the study of religion.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- David Newheiser, Australian Catholic University  
dnewheiser@gmail.com
- Michelle Sanchez, Harvard University  
msanchez@hds.harvard.edu

## Practical Theology Unit

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Call Text:

Learnings from the pandemic: Implications of Adapting and Inventing Ecclesial Practices for COVID

Co-sponsor: Association for Practical Theology

Since the beginning of 2020, a global pandemic has occurred due to COVID-19. Important health measures have curtailed life as normal in many ways. Church practices have also been directly affected by these measures, not only church services but also ministry in its many forms. One result was the digitalizing of ecclesial life in a variety of formats through which contact networks emerged, online worship services were streamed, and a wide range of practices were developed. Other results were new forms of in-person practices like creative forms of worship in parking lots, innovative food pantries, and chaplains finding new ways of communicating and being present to patients and families at the hospital. The new forms of communication were developed, planned and designed by different actors, and their outreach was aimed at different contexts. In this session, we welcome practical theological papers that reflect empirically and/or hermeneutically on these pandemic learnings. What was the design of these practices and the conditions under which they were developed and structured? To what extent will they continue to exist even though the situation has changed again? And in which ways do these – revised – practices expand understandings of church and ministry?

Caution, Flammable: Ideological Differences and Divisions with a Religion-Politics

This call from the Practical Theology Group invites papers or panel proposals that investigate how persons and communities engage ideological differences in dealing with a religion-politics. What are ways that people attend, engage, and perhaps overcome--if desirable--religiopolitical divisions? How does this work take shape differently in the traditional sub-disciplines of practical theology (religious education, liturgics, congregational studies, homiletics, pastoral care, and social mission)? While this call is especially pertinent for the religiopolitical situation in the U.S., the intertwining of religion, ideology, and politics makes up a flammable cocktail that calls for practical theological attention worldwide. The committee is particularly interested in presentations discussing ongoing and completed research projects that bring insight to the interdisciplinary nexus of political and practical theology. We welcome papers that explore methodological and theoretical implications for the study of practical theology, as well as substantial implications for religious and political community engagement.

An Author in Conversation: Nicola Slee, *Fragments for Fractured Times: What Feminist Practical Theology Brings to the Table* (2020 SCM Press)

This panel will explore the latest work of poet and feminist practical theologian, Nicola Slee, from Queens Foundation for Ecumenical Education in the UK. Bringing together 15

years of research and teaching, this collection of essays “offer[s] a range of highly contextualized ‘fragments’—all written for specific groups of people and situations—that hold up to the light some aspect of feminist and practical theological practice or thinking for closer scrutiny” (Slee). Three panelists (yet to be named) will engage Slee’s lead essay about the nature of practical theology, understood in terms of what she calls “fragments for fractured times.” Panelists will also have the opportunity to respond to other essays on liturgy and prayer, spirituality, poetics, work (teaching, reading, writing, and research) and theology, including a theology of the Christa. Reviewers have described Slee’s book as a “stellar contribution” and “prophetic poetry” that is timely, sensitive, and wise.

### Migration and Practical Theology: Explorations

The Practical Theology Unit seeks individual paper proposals and session proposals (presider, 3 presenters, respondent) for the 2021 Annual Meeting to be held in San Antonio, TX related to the following themes, building on our 2020 calls around practical theology’s response to interfaith challenges and to the ecological crisis:

- The global climate crisis affects millions, and is a major driver of global migration. Following the work of Rachel Muers’ work on intergeneration ethics, we invite proposals that think in practical theological terms about the long-term and global effects of actions taken today.
- Migrant has caused new proximity of religious others, and prompted deepened engagement with interfaith realities. We invite proposals that highlight case studies of practical theological responses to interfaith encounters driven by migration.
- Other topics at the intersection of migration and practical theology.

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Sabrina Mueller, Zurich University  
sabrina.mueller@theol.uzh.ch
- Marc Lavalley,  
mlavalley@portsmouthabbey.org

## Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit

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### Call Text:

The Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit seek papers dealing with the State of the Field. What is the state of American Pragmatism? More specifically what are the current directions in the field regarding race, gender, capital, ecological ethics, etc? What are the possibilities and limitations within the tradition regarding new developments in religious studies, political theology, etc? We are particularly interested in papers that deal with the following themes:

Papers on John Dewey, Jane Addams and social justice and the limitations regarding race, gender, sexuality, poverty and culture.

Papers on the State of American Pragmatism relative to epistemology in the Trump-era (or post-Trump administration) challenge to 'truth' and 'facts.'

Papers on Pragmatism, Imagination, and American culture. What America means post-COVID, current social justice issues.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Karen Rucks, Quinsigamond Community College  
karenl.rucks@charter.net
- Joseph Winters, Duke University  
joseph.winters@duke.edu

## Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

### 1. How are religious and spiritual leaders faring?

We invite papers and presentations that share findings from any study of religious leaders during the global pandemic(s) of 2020-21. We are especially interested in religious, spiritual and psychological analysis or assessments of the ways religious leaders, including chaplains, pastors, imams, rabbis, priests, teachers, monks, sisters, chieftains, pastoral counselors, and/or religious leaders of any faith group are coping with the challenges of the times. Specific topics might include (but are not limited to) the healthcare crisis, protests/activism, leadership, conflict, family stresses, personal mental health, stress and burnout, spiritual practices, and/or grief and loss.

### 2. What Do We Mean by the Word "Trauma"? An Interdisciplinary Exploration (Co-Sponsored with the Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Unit)

The word "trauma" has accrued different meanings in various disciplinary contexts, with a more rapid accrual of meanings in recent years as trauma has been studied alongside related and often overlapping concepts (injury, harm, wounding, etc.). Theologians and ethicists, literary theorists, sociologists, psychoanalysts, and pastoral caregivers all engage trauma but do they mean the same thing? Definitions seem to be broader or narrower depending on whether one takes a theoretical or a clinical approach. Clinicians may use the term more specifically than theologians or ethicists. Writing on moral injury, post-traumatic growth, and trauma studies reveals multiple definitions as well, in addition to the DSM 5. This session addresses the question of what we mean by the word "trauma" and what does it matter?

### 3. Virtual Caring: Psychological and Religious Relationality in the Age of Distance

The COVID-19 pandemic ushered in the era of "virtual care." Ministry, psychotherapy, pastoral care, chaplaincy, teaching, and even the AAR Annual Meeting took place in virtual spaces. Many helping encounters became "shoulders-up" in contexts that have traditionally allowed and encouraged physical presence and visual engagement. In the past year, technology has often dictated the possibilities of care. This session explores the experience and effects of "relationality at a distance" from psychological, religious, and cultural perspectives. What has the pandemic taught us about relationality and care?

### 4. Grim Convergences: Psychology and Religion at the Intersection of Loss, Trauma, and Violence

The realities of 2020 are not quite in the rearview mirror. 2021 and beyond will be a time of reckoning with the convergence of loss, trauma and violence that are hallmarks of 2020 and which have become active dynamics in our shared psychological, cultural, and religious landscape. This call for papers invites discussion about emerging theoretical

and practical resources that are capable of analyzing and responding to the convergence of loss, trauma and violence resulting from the ongoing and overlapping pandemics of COVID-19 and the various social injustices that it brought to the foreground: race and healthcare, immigration policy and trauma, food insecurity, more. Our interest is to engage the psychological implications of this convergence, with an eye towards praxis that equips scholars and practitioners with frames of reference for psychological and spiritual care. Papers that privilege intersectional analysis via post-colonial, liberationist, critical race, womanist, feminist, queer, humanist, and interfaith lenses are especially welcome.

#### 5. Same Storm, Different Boats: Who Lives and Dies in a Pandemic?

While the COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted every human being around the world, the severity and extent to which individuals have experienced loss has varied greatly. Some have lost careers, homes, and a viable way to provide even basic needs for themselves and their families. Others, who have financial autonomy or the privilege of working from home have benefited - sometimes significantly - from pandemic-related businesses, opportunities to save money, or realizing the gains from the record year in the 2020 stock market. Poorer people have seen far worse health outcomes from the virus than those with wealth and access to premium health care. What do the vast disparities which have been accentuated by the coronavirus pandemic and determine who lives and who dies, or who degenerates into poverty and who accumulates more wealth, reveal about the unconscious social contract that governs society? What do these disparities reveal about the systems that determine which *body-types* (i.e., racial, gender, sexuality, age, etc.) are worth saving and protecting for life after the virus, and which *body-types* are disposable? This call for papers invites reflections on these disparities from religious and psychological perspectives.

#### Mission Statement:

The PCR unit is 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.

Here are ways to connect with the PCR unit

- Please find info on the Annual PCR Call for Papers here: <https://aarweb.org/content/psychology-culture-and-religion-unit>
- Join the PCR listserv by writing to: [psychculturereigion@aarlists.org](mailto:psychculturereigion@aarlists.org)

- You can also join the PCR Facebook group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/558617967619873/>

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Eileen Campbell-Reed, Union Theological Seminary, NYC  
eileen.campbellreed@gmail.com
- Lisa M. Cataldo, Fordham University  
lisacataldo7@gmail.com

## Quaker Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

The Quaker Studies Unit invites paper proposals on any topic related to Quakerism, to religious groups that bear a family resemblance to Quakerism, or to secular social movements that have been influenced by Quaker ideals. The unit is especially interested in proposed papers (or panels) that analyze Quakers and economic class or Quakers and capitalism. It would also welcome proposed panels that focus on a recently-published scholarly book that raises significant questions about the current state of Quaker Studies.

The Quaker Studies Unit be holding a postponed session from 2020 and will not be accepting new proposals for a co-sponsored with Eastern Orthodox Unit: Spiritual Light in the Orthodox and Quaker Spiritual Traditions.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Jennifer Buck, Azusa Pacific University  
jen.marie.buck@gmail.com
- David Watt, Haverford College  
dwatt@haverford.edu

## Queer Studies in Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

We invite paper and session proposals on the following themes, as well as other papers and sessions that engage broadly with themes related to queer and trans studies in religion:

Analyzing/theorizing the entanglement of white supremacy and Christian hegemony and the disciplining of queerly racialized bodies. We especially invite attention to the regulation of queer and trans Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC); non-Christian or outsider Christian communities; and/or regulatory norms of Christian whiteness.

Queering mysticism or mysticism and unruly desire (for potential co-sponsoring with mysticism unit).

Queer sacred spaces and history (considering, for instance, the queer nightclub scene in San Antonio, the importance of space during and after COVID-19, etc).

A panel celebrating and honoring the work of Mark Jordan.

New works in progress (particularly centering the work of junior scholars).

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Brandy Daniels, University of Portland  
brandydaniels@gmail.com
- Elyse Ambrose,  
eambrose@drew.edu

## Qur'an Unit

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### Call Text:

The Qur'an Unit welcomes papers 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. We welcome proposals that represent the full range of how the Qur'an can be approached in terms of academic methods, as well as the full range of ways in which the Qur'an is interpreted and interacted with in Islamic tradition.

For the 2021 annual meeting, we are especially interested in proposals highlighting new or developing areas of research in relation to the Qur'an, and/including the following topics:

- The Qur'an in Africa
- The Qur'an in North America
- The Qur'an in African American Communities
- Ethics and the Qur'an
- Shi`ite interpretation
- The Qur'an and the environment and/or animals

### On preparation and evaluation of proposals:

Evaluation of proposals to the Qur'an Unit are done by the Steering Committee through anonymous 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. Regardless of topic, each proposal should reflect an interaction with past and current scholarship and should advance the academic knowledge of aspects of the Qur'an. Also, proposals should describe presentations that reasonably can be made with the time limits imposed by the session lengths given us by the AAR. This means that a paper should be limited to fifteen minutes to allow the maximum number of participants and time for questions and discussion. When considering a proposal, please pay attention to the presentation format so that the presentation will be accessible to individuals with visual and/or auditory impairments. It is the aim of the Qur'an Group to make our presentations accessible and available to the greatest possible number of members of the American Academy of Religion.

### 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, scholars from all areas of the academy, and scholars of diverse backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and religion to help us achieve our goals of promoting an understanding of the Qur'an.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Gordon D. Newby, Emory University  
gdnewby@emory.edu
- Lauren Osborne, Whitman College  
osbornle@whitman.edu

## Reformed Theology and History Unit

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Call Text:

The Reformed Theology and History Unit seeks paper proposals on the following topics:

(1) Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2: The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Processions and Persons*.

The Reformed Theology and History Unit invites proposals from prospective panelists to join a conversation with Katherine Sonderegger on the topic of her 2020 publication, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2: The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Processions and Persons*. Panelists are invited to engage with the volume and its out working, offering critical analysis and reflection. Papers may address any aspect of Sonderegger's work including, but not limited to, her engagements with classic and modern figures on the themes of divine Holiness, divine Triunity, divine Mystery, divine Processions, divine Persons, or reading Holy Scripture. Consideration might also be given to the larger shape of Sonderegger's contribution and the development offered in this volume in light of the first. Proposals should outline short papers that offer constructive review that might in turn empower a bright discussion to follow. Sonderegger will respond to accepted papers and join the conversation with panelists.

(2) The Politics of Providence

A particularly strong version of the doctrine of providence has played a central yet complex role in shaping Reformed theology and identity, from its sixteenth-century origins to the diverse global diaspora today. Calvin ties providence to the doctrine of creation, arguing that God is not a momentary creator but actively watching over and directing the continuing state of the universe. This recalls the ambiguity of the Greek term *pronoia*: providence is sovereign fore-sight as well as sovereign over-sight. As such, it involves a logic of governance over particular entities, in time and history as well as space and place, which has proven a powerful teaching for Reformed groups experiencing a wide range of circumstances: for example, those legitimating or resisting existing forms of socio-political order; actively (re)forming cities and states; and experiencing displacement or justifying settlement.

We seek papers that critically and constructively explore the relationship between the doctrine of providence and strategies of governance. Papers may be historical, theological, or textual-theoretical, and could explore concrete relationships between "Reformed" (broadly construed) accounts of providence and the following:

- State surveillance or governmentality more generally
- Narratives of historical progress or manifest destiny
- Ranking of peoples according to racial or civilizational taxonomies
- Conceptions of stewardship and ecological exploitation
- Strategies for resisting existing hegemonies or arguments for political quietism
- Justifications for/critiques of the accumulation and uses of wealth

- Justifications for/critiques of civilizational, institutional, religious, racial, species-based or other forms of supremacy
- Valuations/critiques of technology/technocracy
- Valuations/critiques of political theology, in the sense of exploring the validity of the analogy between divine sovereignty and modern political sovereignty
- Arguments for or against human participation in providential activity, whether as stewards or sovereign deputies
- Hermeneutics of discerning the providence of God at work in, with, and under secondary causes
- Pastoral and constructive resourcing for minoritized and persecuted communities

### (3) Reformed Tradition and Ecclesial Life in Asian America (co-sponsored)

RTHU and Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society invite proposals for papers that examine the Reformed tradition and ecclesial life focusing on the Asian North American context. Interdisciplinary papers engaging with current or historical issues in theology, immigration, race and politics, transnational relations with diasporic communities, theological formation of church leaders, and tensions with and receptions of Reformed theologians and models of Reformed faith would all be suitable topics for inquiry. Historical, theological, intercultural, missiological, sociological, ethnographic, postcolonial, and other methodological approaches are welcome, especially constructive retrievals and imaginings. We especially welcome proposals that focus on communities that have been historically underrepresented within the Asian North American community, including Southeast Asian, South Asian, and Pacific Islander, and communities, as well as interracial dynamics with other BIPOC communities.

#### Mission Statement:

This Unit seeks to open up the traditions of Reformed Christianity for critical review and study, attending to their theological and historical patterns of belief, practice, and polity. Our aim is to present panels and paper sessions that balance theological and historical approaches, and that attend from diverse perspectives to single figures and larger cultural movements, with a particular interest in exploring 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.

#### Method of Submission: INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Christina Larsen, Grand Canyon University  
larsen.cn@gmail.com
- Joshua Ralston, University of Edinburgh  
joshua.ralston@ed.ac.uk

## Religion and Cities Unit

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### Call Text:

In recent years, we have witnessed the intensification of economic inequalities in cities. Gentrification has resulted in displacement and homelessness with municipal divestment exacerbating public health and environmental concerns. At the same time, individuals around the globe are taking to the street and occupying cities to fight for racial and economic justice (i.e. Black Lives Movement, protest encampments, Umbrella Revolution, Indian farmers protest). The Religion and Cities Unit seeks papers and panels that examine the role of religion in such shifts and political organizing in cities. How is religion complicit in gentrification/divestment? How are religious actors stepping up for disappearing welfare States? And how are faith leaders participating in contemporary justice movements?

### Possible Co-Sponsor Sessions:

For a possible joint session with the Native Traditions in the Americas Unit, we invite papers focusing on Indigenous communities in urban spaces, their diversity, resiliency, and creativity. Of particular interest are papers exploring the unique challenges Indigenous peoples face protecting the sacred (burial grounds, ceremonial spaces, water, etc.) within urban contexts.

For a possible joint session with Space, Place and Religion Unit

Space and Prayer in Motion: Density, diversity, and movement characterize urban space. We seek papers about the city as a setting for spirituality, and especially about the way those who pray make use of urban environments. How do city spaces set prayer in motion or bring prayer into public view? We also welcome papers addressing how race, gender, class, accessibility, and religious difference shape the dynamics of urban mobility in such situations. Possible topics might include prayer walking, prayer in schools, public religious activities, the role technologies of movement play in these activities, and public spaces such as roads and plazas used for prayer.

We invite proposals in a variety of formats, including paper presentations, roundtable discussions, workshops, full panel proposals, panels that include artists, activists, and other community partners, panels connected to ongoing projects including podcasts, blogs, maps, and other digital humanities projects, and also panels on new books or articles - such as Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada's *Lifblood of the Parish: Men and Catholic Devotion in Williamsburg* or Alisa Perkins *Brooklyn and Muslim American City: Gender and Religion in Metro Detroit*.

### Mission Statement:

This unit engages in critical analysis of ecological relationships between religion and cities.

We are particularly interested in how white settler colonialism, racial capitalism, and

heteropatriarchy shape cooperative and conflicting relationships between cities across the globe and their religious communities in the struggle for social justice.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Harold Morales, Morgan State University  
harold.morales@morgan.edu
- Rupa Pillai, University of Pennsylvania  
rupillai@sas.upenn.edu

## Religion and Disability Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

The Religion and Disability Studies Unit invites proposals that critically examine the relationship between disability and religious thought, practice, or history. We welcome papers on all topics, especially from non-Christian perspectives and/or as they relate to this year's conference theme on Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures.

We especially seek proposals on the following:

- Intersections of disability and race: possible areas to explore include (but are not limited to) neurodiversity, affect and affect theory, religious representations of disability, in particular the role racial, ethnic or cultural perspectives have played in challenging or reforming religious communities with regard to disability issues.
- For a book panel on Christian theology, ethics, and praxis, we invite engagements with Rebecca F. Spurier's *The Disabled Church: Human Difference and the Art of Communal Worship* (Fordham University Press, 2019).
- Disability theory or disability experiences bearing on ethical concerns regarding healthcare, COVID-19, genetic therapy and counseling, transhumanism, or any other bioethical issue (for a possible co-sponsored session with the Bioethics and Religion Unit).
- 'Disability' as lens to either interpret or reimagine embodied religious practices, such as meditation, yoga, prayer, dance, or other ritual performances, for a possible co-sponsorship with the Theology and Religious Reflection Unit.
- Disability intersected with gender, sexuality, class, and race as an important tool in analyzing social inequalities. For a possible co-sponsored session with the Women and Religion Unit, we seek presentations exploring theories, experiences, and/or activism at the intersections of disability, gender, sexuality, and race to bear on analysis of poverty and growing inequalities. For example, what kind of disability perspectives are vital for religion scholars to interrogate political economic inequalities? How would intersectional approaches to social inequalities envision a new social order with an emphasis on gender and disability justice?
- The place of 'disability' in educational policy and practice, for a possible co-sponsorship with the Theological Education Committee. Possible topics include Universal Design for Learning, the impact of the American with Disabilities Act across its thirty-year history, or recent developments in pedagogy informed by disability theory or the experiences of persons with disabilities, their families, and instructors.

### 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. As intersectionality becomes an increasingly critical hermeneutic in the academy, we encourage robust dialogue and collaboration with other program units involved with disciplined reflection on religion.

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Heike Peckruhn, Daemen College  
hpeckruh@daemen.edu
- David Scott, Iliff School of Theology  
dscott@iliff.edu

## Religion and Ecology Unit

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Call Text:

Presidential Theme of Religion, Poverty, and Inequality. The Religion and Ecology Unit seeks individual paper and complete panel proposals relating to a wide range of themes in religion and ecology including proposals that resonate with the 2021 AAR President's thematic emphasis of "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures."

The religious undercurrents that have appeared in the chaos of 2020, especially in light of the AAR's commitment to public understanding, compels us to examine the meaning and significance of religion within our current social moment. To that end, AAR President Marla Frederick invites all units to "direct our attention toward poverty and inequality, focusing particularly on the social, ideological and textual interpretations of various traditions that help us understand how religion aids, impedes and/or amends our common life."

The presidential theme raises several important questions for the field of religion and ecology. To that end, we are interested in individual paper or complete panel proposals that address the convergence of religion, ecology, poverty, and inequality. Possible topics could include: environmental degradation and economic collapse, biodiversity loss and impoverishment, responses to the emergence of climate totalitarianism and eco-fascism through imagining regenerative and/or anticipatory futures, and communities and/or activists who are on-the-ground shaping the future.

The Religion and Ecology Unit also is pursuing co-sponsored sessions with other units as follows:

"Religion in the public square and its impact on global climate change." As a collaboration with the Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit, this session would explore the ways in which diverse religious teachings, traditions, and communities both resist and catalyze action in the public square when navigating the complex reality of global climate change.

"Ideologies of 'blood and soil' and white nationalism in recent radical political movements." We are seeking presentations for a co-sponsored session between the Religion and Ecology Unit and the Pagan Studies Unit related to ideologies of "blood and soil" or white nationalism, as these motifs present engagement with contemporary Paganism and Heathenry. Questions to address might include, but not be limited to:

- For these movements, what is the significance of religious identity, ancestry, and connection to land?
- How are concerns related to authenticity, legitimation, and "imagined community" involved in these narratives?
- What implications does this suggest for developing attachment to place, and bioregional identity in settler and other populations?

Ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and ecofeminismo. Together with the Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Units, the Religion and Ecology Unit invite papers engaging ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and ecofeminismo from religious, indigenous or theological perspectives. In light of amplifying calls for decolonization, anti-racism, climate justice, and gender justice, it is increasingly clear why we must insist on the intersectional analysis exemplified by ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and ecofeminismo. Proposal might include, but are not limited to, the intersections of gender, race, class, nature, species, and religion. Presentations may address these topics broadly, or they may consider the following questions:

- In what ways have current environmental and climate justice issues challenged ecowomanism, ecofeminism, or ecofeminismo?
- What important contributions have religion, spirituality, or indigenous lifeways made to the development of ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and/or ecofeminismo? Why do commonly expressed accusations of essentialism and/or universalism towards ecofeminism persist?
- What unique insights do these perspectives bring to analyzing and protesting police brutality, colonialism, and/or exploitative extraction?
- What blindspots of exclusion or privilege persist in recent expressions of ecowomanism, ecofeminism, and/or ecofeminismo?
- Proposals that highlight current ground-level movements or important actors, such as Berta Caceres, are especially welcome.

Please note that, while individual paper proposals are given full consideration, we especially appreciate complete panel proposals and panels that offer creative alternatives to the usual format of reading out 4-5 papers.

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 from a variety of social sciences such as those found in the work of theologians, philosophers, religionists, ethicists, scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists, among others. We also strive to be a radically inclusive unit and welcome papers that challenge the dominant Eurocentric environmental discourse while envisioning new conceptual frontiers.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Christopher Carter, University of San Diego  
christophercarter@sandiego.edu
- Forrest Clingerman, Ohio Northern University  
f-clingerman@onu.edu

## Religion and Economy Unit

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### Call Text:

This Unit welcomes individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable proposals related to the group's mission, including but not limited to the themes described below. We strongly encourage the submission of pre-arranged sessions, including and especially sessions with innovative formats and modes of presentation. Proposals for individual papers are most likely to be accepted if proposed in relation to one of the themes listed below. Please note that our Unit typically holds sessions that last 90 minutes.

Successful proposals not only will reflect theoretical and methodological rigor and clarity but also will engage existing scholarship around the study of religion and economy. A successful pre-arranged session also must incorporate gender and racial/ethnic diversity. Diversity of academic rank, theoretical method, and field also are encouraged.

- Money and Justice. In 2020, our unit postponed a session that focused on the dynamic relationship between money and justice in Islam. To potentially expand upon the contributions to that session, we invite papers that consider ethical thought regarding money, wealth, or finance in other traditions of religious thought and ethics.
- Sacrifice in the Time of Plague (potentially co-sponsored with Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit). During the past year, the novel coronavirus-19 virus clearly has followed existing patterns of inequality when traveling through the social body. In this, scholars have experienced and analyzed the pandemic through a variety of critical approaches, including the study of ideology and capitalist abstraction, biopolitics and the precarity of disposable populations, utopian thinking, critical race theory, and the failure to socially mourn poor and legally and culturally disenfranchised persons. We ask: what determines who lives and who dies when worlds fall apart? We invite paper proposals for a roundtable discussion featuring diverse methodological and disciplinary vantage points that somehow analyze the role of sacrifice in our time of plague.
- The Economics of Religious Spaces (co-sponsored with Space, Place, and Religion). How are religious spaces created or maintained based on economic models (e.g., corporate organization, practices of giving, marketing strategies, promotional schemes)? How can these varying economic models be compared across and within forms of religious life? How have fundraising needs and philanthropic support shaped varied sites? Alternatively, how have critiques of money and religion affected religious sites and spaces? Topics for this panel could also include how the economic realities of COVID-19 have led to the shuttering or reimagining of space by religious groups or religiously oriented charities. How, for example, has the pandemic exacerbated class-based differences in religious spaces?

- Fifty Years of Teología de la Liberación: Examining Gustavo Gutiérrez's influence and the task of the liberation of theology (co-sponsored by Black Theology Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, Liberation Theologies Unit, Religion and Economy Unit, Religion in the Latina/o Americas Unit, Roman Catholic Studies Unit, and Vatican II Unit). In 1971 Gustavo Gutiérrez published the article "Hacia Una Teología de la Liberación," followed by one of the most influential books of the 20th century, *Teología de la Liberación: Perspectivas*. To mark this year of celebrations, reflections, and conversations on this important anniversary we invite proposals that creatively engage Gutiérrez's work from a variety of interdisciplinary lenses and contexts. We especially invite proposals that bring Gutiérrez's contributions in contact with current challenges and future visions of the liberation of theology and theologies that seek to liberate, including problematizing the meaning(s) and praxis of liberation across the theological disciplines.
- Religion and Economy: The State of the Field. We invite proposals that grapple with the state of the field vis-a-vis the study of religion and economy. What new or influential books have opened up conversations in the field—among your colleagues, or students? What ideas and approaches are contributing to new ways of thinking about the intersections, overlaps, and entanglements between religious and economic worlds? In what ways do you encounter the field(s) of the study of religion reckoning with the political economies that contribute to political and social unrest/upheaval or structures of violence and inequality? We especially welcome proposals that consider the intersectional dynamics that structure the study of religion and economy.

#### Mission Statement:

This Unit sponsors multidisciplinary conversations that explore intersections between religious and economic modes of social life. Religion and Economy 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 inquiry that cuts across religious traditions, geographic locations, methods, 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 the concepts of 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, spirituality, affect, desire, ritual, agency, value, and subject formation.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Elayne Oliphant, New York University  
elayne.oliphant@nyu.edu
- Daniel Vaca, Brown University  
daniel\_vaca@brown.edu

## Religion and Food Unit

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### Call Text:

This Group 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.

We welcome paper proposals. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Mindful of our location in Texas and its mestiza nature, we welcome papers that consider the topic of religion and food of borderlands, broadly conceived, as well as Texas as a place where multiple food traditions flourish both in combination and in isolation from each other
- 2) Similarly, mindful of the indigenous peoples of the San Antonio region, and the particular relations of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, we welcome attention to religion and indigenous, Native American, and First Peoples foodways
- 3) Given the pandemic experience of the past year, we welcome attention to papers that consider the nexus of topics related to religion and the pandemic, food sovereignty, food apartheid, food insecurity, public health, and how faith communities have addressed these issues
- 4) Given renewed attention to coalition building and activism, we also welcome papers considering activism and coalition building, and religious communities, such as food preparation by church for BLM marches, and farm labor rights movement
- 5) We welcome papers considering the interrelation of religion, ritual, community, gender, and labor, especially in light of pandemic-related shifts
- 6) We also welcome papers looking to the place of religion within communal meals
- 7) As always, we welcome papers addressing other topics as well

### 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 (production, preparation, consumption, and invention)
- Diet and sustainability
- Issues of food (in)justice, which may include food availability or insecurity, commitment to wellness, access to healthy foods, food deserts, etc.
- Desertification, flood, fire, and climate related food ethics issues
- 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Derek Hicks, Wake Forest University  
hicksds@wfu.edu
- Benjamin Zeller, Lake Forest College  
zeller@lakeforest.edu

## Religion and Human Rights Unit

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Call Text:

We seek papers that explore the topics of religion and human rights from a breadth of scholarly perspectives. We seek analyses of the way in which particular religious actors and traditions articulate the compatibility or incompatibility of religion and human rights; how human rights serve to complicate or enhance our understanding of categories such as “religion” and “secularity”; and how the intersection of religion and human rights implicates issues of race, gender, law, politics, etc.

Though proposals on any topic related to religion and human rights are welcome, we are particularly interested in proposals on the following topics:

In light of the presidential theme “Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures,” the unit invites papers that examine the intersection of religion and human rights with issues of poverty and inequality. Papers might consider:

- Religious engagement with the articulation of economic and social rights in human rights documents, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights;
- The role of the concept of rights in addressing poverty, in relation to religious discourses that address poverty and inequality in terms of obligations, responsibilities, justice, or charity;
- The history of religious thought and practice related to poverty and inequality and its possible impact on thought about human rights;
- The tension between commonly-recognized human rights like the right to private property and the right to life in a community in which basic needs are met, often through some mechanism of property redistribution; or
- The origins of contemporary rights thought in a modern, Western-influenced and colonialist system in which individualistic notions of property and wealth influence attitudes about rights.
- Papers on other topics related to poverty, inequality, religion, and human rights are welcome.

We invite papers for a joint session with the Native Traditions in the Americas and the Indigenous Religious Traditions Units, titled "Indigenous Religions, Rights, and Borders." This session will particularly concern Indigenous rights across borders, land repatriation, religious freedom, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Any papers on these topics will be considered. Given the location of the Annual Meeting in San Antonio, we especially encourage papers that explore the southern border of the U.S., rights and critique of rights from Native American perspectives, and mythologies about colonial expansion in the Southwest.

We invite papers for a possible joint session with the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit on the seventieth anniversary of the 1951 We Charge Genocide petition, submitted to the United Nations for relief against U.S. abuses of Black citizens. Topics may include

but are not limited to the legacy and significance of the petition's anniversary, activism under the We Charge Genocide Chicago organization and their report presented to the United Nations Committee Against Torture in 2014, and other related issues and concerns.

#### Mission Statement:

The Religion and Human Rights Unit seeks to enhance both scholarly and public conversation around the intersection of religion and human rights ideas and practices. We solicit papers in any area of religion and human rights studies. Topics we engage include: how particular religious actors and traditions articulate the compatibility or incompatibility of religion and human rights; how human rights serve to complicate or enhance our understanding of categories such as “religion” and “secularity”; how religious and human rights approaches address particular cases and social issues; and how the intersection of religion and human rights implicates issues of race, gender, law, politics, etc. We recognize that both human rights and religious ideologies can inspire thought and action that benefits the vulnerable and promotes the common good; at the same time, both can serve the interests of power, oppression, and colonialist hegemony. Thus it is vitally important to evaluate and critique both. Participants in the unit approach these topics, and others, from diverse areas of study, methodologies, and perspectives.

The unit also prioritizes the public understanding of religion in conversation with human rights ideas. Human rights is a much-discussed topic in the media and political circles, yet much public dialogue assumes that religion and human rights are either straightforwardly congruent with each other, or straightforwardly opposed to each other. The unit welcomes papers that critique, nuance, and enhance public understanding of the intersection of religion and human rights.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Laura Alexander, University of Nebraska, Omaha  
lealex@unomaha.edu
- Jenna Reinbold, Colgate University  
jreinbold@colgate.edu

## Religion and Migration Unit

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### Call Text:

The Religion and Migration Unit seeks individual paper proposals and session proposals (presider, 3 presenters, respondent) for the 2021 Annual Meeting to be held in San Antonio related to the following themes:

- Migration and Intersectionality (i.e. race, gender, socio-economic status)
- Migration and Inter-religious Dialogue
- Religious Beliefs Among "Illegal" versus "Illegal" Immigrants/Undocumented Migrants
- Using Religion as a Tool to Understand the Migratory Journey
- Migration and Innovations in Agency
- Migration and Innovation in Leadership
- Migration and Multiple Belongings
- Migration and LGBTQ Issues/Gender Issues
- The Commodification of Migration in the Post-Colonial World
- Migration, Intersectionality and Feminism
- Immigration in Popular Culture

Finally, we offer an open call for any other topics dealing with religion and migration, especially proposals that address theoretical and methodological issues in the field of migration in relation to religious studies. We are also interested in hosting a book panel, so please feel free to submit panel submissions for recently published books on Migration and Religion (author, respondents, panelists).

### 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 furthering the discussion on religion and migration, please join the AAR Religion and Migration Group on Facebook.

### Method of Submission: INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Eunil David Cho, Emory University  
davidchoknows@gmail.com
- Nanette Spina, University of Georgia  
spinan@uga.edu

## Religion and Politics Unit

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### Call Text:

Joint session with Sociology of Religion Unit: Topics related to Texas and borderlands (e.g., religion and politics, religious identity and voting patterns, Latinx and Asian migration, evangelical-Catholic interactions)

We ask for papers on the intersection of religion and politics from a national and an international perspective on any topic but this year we are particularly interested in:

1. Civil religion and religious nationalism
2. Artificial intelligence and Surveillance
3. The Supreme Court
4. International perspectives on religious freedom
5. Human dignity and nature
6. Religion, politics, and class

### 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 year-round Religion and Politics Google group, which is open to all AAR members here: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/aar-religionandpolitics>

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- John D. Carlson, Arizona State University  
john.carlson@asu.edu
- Rachel M. Scott, Virginia Tech  
rmh@vt.edu

## Religion and Popular Culture Unit

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Call Text:

In 2021 the Religion and Popular Culture Unit is moving two panels from 2020's pre-COVID program to this year's programming. That said, we still have space for multiple panels and are calling for proposals in the following areas:

**The Western/Cowboy Genre in American Mythology.** Recognizing the 2021 Annual Meeting's location in Texas, we welcome proposals on connections and tensions between the individual and the collective in the Western genre, including sacralized representations of vigilantism and law enforcement in contemporary popular culture (copaganda?): How might we re-evaluate the Western's classic narrative of vigilante justice in light of ongoing police violence against vulnerable populations? We are also interested in mythic representation of the other in the Western: How does this genre naturalize and celebrate the white settlement of the Western states? We welcome analysis of literature, radio, TV, films, video games, etc.

**The New Geography of Religion and Popular Culture.** Physical spaces across the world are changing due to economic, political, and public health transitions that are having lasting effects on communities. We are interested in how these changes are causing both losses of old religious and popular culture practices, the revival and reconstruction of supposedly bygone practices (e.g., drive-ins), and the development of new and innovative practices in physical space. We invite papers that both report on and theorize these developments.

**New Modes of Delivery as a Methodological Challenge and Opportunity.** How does the availability of streaming services, extensive back catalogues, and online archives affect the way we research religion and popular culture?

**Media and Ritual during the Pandemic.** How has the COVID pandemic changed the way that religious organizations engage popular culture and use it to maintain social bonds in an era of social distancing? We are particularly interested in ritual changes and innovations that have developed during this time and what their long-term significance appears to be.

**QAnon and "Conspirituality."** QAnon has brought Evangelical and New Age/Wellness/Yoga communities into proximity in an unusual and unprecedented way. We welcome considerations (and criticisms) of the concept of "conspirituality" -- conspiracy theories that fuel and form a new church, soteriologies propagated on Reddit and social media, and memes that globalize paranoia.

2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the film *Fiddler on the Roof* and The Study of Judaism and Religion and Popular Culture Units are co-sponsoring a call for papers exploring the film; the Broadway show and its many revivals, including amateur and international productions; and/or the Sholem Aleichem stories. We are particularly

interested in theoretically driven papers, including those that question the politics of nostalgia, the universalizing of the shtetl, and gender and sexuality.

The Literature of Ted Chiang – for a potential co-sponsored panel with the Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit and the Science Fiction and Religion Unit. We solicit proposals that engage the work of Ted Chiang in tandem with theories or tropes of religion and/or science fiction. We are receptive to a wide range of critical approaches that engage any of Chiang's novels, short stories or collections.

Open Call. We welcome any and all proposals that are not specifically mentioned in the call for papers and we are specifically interested in topics and theoretical insights from outside North America.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- David Feltmate, Auburn University, Montgomery  
dfeltmat@aum.edu
- Elijah Siegler, College of Charleston  
sieglere@cofc.edu

## Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit

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### Call Text:

The “Religion & Public Schools: International Perspectives” program unit welcomes diverse approaches and methods, and always seeks to situate our papers and panels within global and comparative contexts. Our primary focus is on the many ways in which religion education is undertaken and understood in public/state schools. This year we are calling for papers/proposals on any of the following topics:

#### (1) Teaching about Religion in Texas

The 2021 Annual Meeting will take place in San Antonio, in a state that has been at the center of many legal, political, and theological debates about whether and how to teach about religion in public school classrooms. We invite scholars, teachers, and policymakers to present case studies and analytic papers that foster a better understanding of this context and a view of its future.

#### (2) How related academic fields contribute to the study of religion and education

The field of religion and education is interdisciplinary by nature, but is of course rooted in religious studies and education. This session would ask what forms of knowledge and understanding could be contributed by other related fields such as the cognitive science of religion, social psychology, geography, sociology, political theory, comparative theology, history.

#### (3) Religion Education, Religious Studies, and Economic Inequality

In connection with the AAR Presidential theme, these papers might ask: How does/can religion education relate to, reinforce, reframe, or alleviate poverty and economic inequality around the world?

Priority will be given to proposals that fit the above themes, but we will also consider other papers in our program unit’s general purview that are not tied to the above themes.

After we evaluate our paper and session proposals, our steering committee will organize one session of our own and one co-sponsored session with a program unit whose interests closely relate to the session themes.

### Mission Statement:

This Program Unit promotes the global and comparative study of "religion education" in public schools around the world. By encouraging interdisciplinary research on the ethical, legal, political, pedagogical, and theological 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 religious education and citizenship education in pluralistic democratic societies.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Angela Bernardo, Sapienza University of Rome  
angela.bernardo@uniroma1.it
- Erik Owens, Boston College  
erik.owens@bc.edu

## 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 and invite proposals from a commensurate range of disciplinary and methodological approaches.

Of particular interest will be papers that sit at the intersection between science fiction, religion-and-science, technology, and public policy. Possibilities include superheroes, socially participatory AIs, technological interventions to end scarcity, intergalactic travel, human enhancement, and bioengineering. Other possible topics or panel proposals would be considered addressing issues such as: Religion and A.I. & Monsters; The work of NK Jemisin; Boston/New England in SF: HP Lovecraft's Mythos to Stephen King's *Cell* and beyond.

Metaphors for colonization, such as invasion, infection, and contagion, expose fears that often underlie religious violence, societal division, and racial conflict. We seek papers that engage both alternative histories and futures, including both theories of science fiction and the science fictionalization of history, colonialism, disease, infections and/or revolutions. Other possible connected topics include aboriginal, Native American traditions; relatedly, decolonizing narratives and theories present in Science fiction.

We seek proposals for a co-sponsored session with Religion and Popular Culture and Religion, Literature and Arts that engages the work of Ted Chiang in tandem with theories or tropes of religion and/or science fiction. We are receptive to a wide range of critical approaches that engage any of Chiang's novels, short stories or collections .

The AAR Theme this year is Religion, Poverty, Inequality: Contemplating our Collective Futures. Contemplating, engineering, and envisioning the future is the very foundation of science fiction. Indeed, science fiction writers are often credited with the ability to predict the future, although as Octavia Butler wrote, "writing novels about the future doesn't give me any special ability to foretell the future. But it does encourage me to use our past and present behaviors as guides to the kind of world we seem to be creating." We invite paper proposals that engage these pressing contemporary issues through the lens of speculative fiction. Related to this theme is prediction and prophetic writing, such as but not limited to the work of Margaret Atwood, Paolo Bacigalupi, Octavia Butler, Nnedi Okorafor, and Kim Stanley Robinson.

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE, 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)

Chairs:

- Laura Ammon, Appalachian State University  
lauraammon@gmail.com
- Emanuelle Burton, University of Illinois, Chicago  
emanuelle.burton@gmail.com

## Religion and Sexuality Unit

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Call Text:

We are particularly interested in papers addressing and analyzing the following themes:

-For a potential co-sponsored session with the Mysticism Unit: "Mysticism and Unruly Desire": We welcome papers that explore the role of desire and its objects in mystical discourse and practice, with particular attention to desires that are not routinized or heteronormative. We particularly welcome papers that explore a contemporary perspective and/or use an empirical approach.

-We invite potential contributions for a co-sponsored session with the Teaching Religion Unit about Religion, the Body, and Sexuality (Hoel, Wilcox, Wilson) <https://www.routledge.com/Religion-the-Body-and-Sexuality-An-Introductio...> Proposals should emphasize specific ways in which this text has inspired or might inspire innovative pedagogy about religion, the body, and sexuality.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Sarojini Nadar, University of the Western Cape  
snadar@uwc.ac.za
- Claudia Schippert, University of Central Florida  
claudiaschippert@gmail.com

Call Text:

The Religion and Social Sciences Unit (RSS) invites proposals for papers and research projects that address the introspective turn to the theme of the 2021 conference: Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating our Collective Futures, which continues with previous presidential themes on research, writing, and thinking about religion and the American public. We welcome proposals that address the following:

- 1.) Ritualistic behavior in/at sites of memory related to Black Lives Matter and other domestic and international protest movements (i.e. immigration). The opportunities and limits of traditional religious communities in this time, seeking to re-imagine and practice just and equitable forms of community that draw on new rituals, ideals, and practices very much rooted in a kind of spirituality in response to COVID-19, anti-black racism, and the pressures facing people of color more broadly.
- 2.) The ways in which COVID-19 has altered congregational life, such as virtual forms of worship, and the ability to build community and care for the most vulnerable, etc.
- 3) Social scientific theorizing and analysis of the nation state's responsibility toward citizens with respect to preserving constitutional and other forms of freedom.
- 4) Response of evangelical communities to COVID-19, its social implications, its implications for religious freedom, and its implications for the relationship between religion and science.
- 5) Religion, Race, and social justice in Southwest region, with a specific focus on social science research emerging that sheds light on the tensions and transformations and challenges facing Latinx communities including those at the southern border. In the wake of the election, the experience of Latinx communities and how religion may or may not be informing political views and social desires.

We encourage proposals to be creative and to not be bound by the traditional read-aloud paper, rather to offer mixed methodology presentation styles such as Prezi, visual imagery, and sound.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Anonymity of Review Process: 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.

Chairs:

- Nichole Phillips, Emory University  
nichole.r.phillips@emory.edu
- Sara Williams, Emory University  
sara.williams@emory.edu

## Religion in Europe Unit

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### Call Text:

This Unit analyzes religion in both Eastern and Western Europe or related to Europe in any historical period. We encourage interdisciplinary, interreligious, and comparative approaches, and we particularly welcome submissions from members of underrepresented groups in the Academy. For the 2021 meeting we especially seek proposals related to one or more of the following themes:

- The reverberations and reincarnations of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement throughout Europe. As in the United States, the protests and demonstrations that occurred in the summer of 2020 in European cities were supported by a diverse range of actors and groups, including religious leaders and groups. We seek proposals that reflect on the experience, background and future of BLM in Europe as related to religion and religious actors in particular European contexts or in a comparative trans-national lens within Europe and/or with the United States.
- For a panel related to this year's AAR Annual Meeting theme, "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures," we seek papers that discuss the various ways that religion or religious belonging has contributed to the attenuation and/or exacerbation of social inequalities in either historical or contemporary Europe, especially relating to those groups that have been historically marginalized in European contexts (i.e. women, immigrants, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Jews, Muslims, etc.). Papers that connect this topic to the above topic of the BLM protests would be especially welcome.
- For a possible co-sponsorship with the "Space, Place, and Religion Unit": The role of sacred places in contemporary European society and culture. Responses toward sacred places often reveal unarticulated attitudes toward the place and role of religious minorities and implicit frames of reference toward debates on religion and secularism. We seek papers that reflect on particular sacred sites, including their symbolic, material, and theoretical dimensions; programs and practices toward protecting, preserving, and/or mythologizing sacred places and religious heritage; practices of pilgrimage, with special reference to the new realities of brought on by COVID travel restrictions; and new frameworks for reflecting on the role of sacred places in 21st century European society and culture.
- For a possible co-sponsorship with the "History of Christianity Unit": Excommunication as a political and social (as well as a religious and theological) act within the European context. In 1521, Pope Leo X formalized Martin Luther's excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church, one of the most politically consequential acts of religious exclusion in European history. In order to interrogate the ongoing relevance of this historical moment, we seek chronologically and geographically diverse proposals that address excommunication as a political and social (as well as a religious and theological) act in the context of Europe. Proposed

papers might address: the formation and enforcement of community norms and boundaries; negotiations of religious, political, or ethnic identities, whether individual or collective; relationships between religious centers and peripheries; the creation of new religious communities and movements; mechanisms of social and religious discipline; and the wider social implications of religious innovation and dissent. We would also welcome papers that discuss the continuing historical effects of the Protestant Reformation--and the results of this separation of Martin Luther from the Catholic Church--on the shape of Europe.

- The changes in the religious landscape in Ireland over the past century, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the end of the Irish War of Independence (1921). We are especially looking for papers that address any of the following themes: overall changes in the religious landscape of Ireland and Northern Ireland over the past century; the relationship of Irish religious culture and traditions to the political relationship of Ireland with the UK and/or Brexit; the relationship of religion, and especially the Catholic Church, to politics of gender and/or abortion in Ireland; or, for a comparative panel, the way other traditionally Catholic European countries have navigated similar politics of gender and/or abortion.
- Shifting religious identities in Europe, historical or contemporary, especially as related to patterns of (im)migration; ethno-religious identity dynamics; and/or national, nationalist, or populist discourses concerning religion, national identity, ethnicity, race, immigration, or similar.

We also welcome proposals that do not correspond to these themes, as well as proposals for complete pre-arranged sessions related to Europe in some fashion. Successful pre-arranged sessions will reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate.

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 both Eastern and Western 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.

Method of Submission: INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Jonathan Teubner, Australian Catholic University  
jonathan.teubner@acu.edu.au
- Carol Ferrara, Boston University  
ferrara@bu.edu

## Religion in Premodern Europe and the Mediterranean Unit

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### Call Text:

We welcome proposals on all topics related to the Unit's subject matter, broadly conceived. Proposals that are themselves comparative in nature or that present novel approaches to the study of premodern religion are particularly welcome. We encourage the submission of preformed panel proposals suitable for 90-minute time slots. We also encourage the submission of individual paper proposals for panels on the following subjects:

1. Religions and poverty in premodern societies: charity and the question of asceticism.  
This session would explore tensions between chosen poverties and unchosen poverties and the idea of serving those defined as poor. To what extent is voluntary poverty and service to the poor a form of asceticism?
2. Charismatic leaders in medieval societies: saints, charlatans, and their followers  
One person's holy man or savior is another's heretic, fraud, or diabolically-inspired villain. How do people discern the difference?

### Mission Statement:

This Unit aims to bring together scholars working on premodern Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in order to create a venue in which religious phenomena can be considered comparatively. Individual papers may be embedded in a single tradition, but presenters should be interested in engaging this material comparatively during the discussion period.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Claire Fanger, Rice University  
claire@celestiscuria.org
- Martha Newman, University of Texas  
newman@austin.utexas.edu

## Religion in South Asia Unit

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### Call Text:

The Steering Committee of the Religion in South Asia (RISA) Unit invites colleagues to submit proposals for the 2021 AAR Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas. RISA's mission is to provide a venue for new research on the many religious cultures, literatures, and histories of South Asia. We have a strong preference for sessions in which the papers cover a range of South Asian traditions, regions, and languages. Some themes already identified as potential papers sessions are listed below – please contact the associated colleagues for details about potential collaboration. Panels and papers are also encouraged that respond to the 2020 AAR Presidential Theme: "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures."

The RISA steering committee accepts full panel submissions only (i.e. Papers Sessions), with the (usual) exception of papers for the New Directions panel. (Please note that RISA will \*not\* be accepting new papers for the New Directions panel for 2021 as the panel from 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19.) For the 2021 Annual Meeting, RISA has a flexible allotment of panel formats: three 2-hour sessions and three 90-minute sessions. RISA can also sponsor one additional 2-hour paper session if it is co-sponsored with another Unit. Please plan your proposals accordingly.

In your proposal, you may specify your preferred panel format (120 or 90 minutes) but the time allotted for accepted panels varies based on the overall programming needs. In the past, 120-minute panels have usually consisted of 6 participants (4 paper presenters, a discussant or respondent, and a presider), and 90-minute panels have consisted of 4 or 5 participants (3 paper presenters, a presider, and perhaps a respondent). However, creative formats are encouraged, such as roundtables, paired papers with no respondent, pre-circulated papers, and so on. If relevant, list any potential co-sponsoring Unit with your proposal. All Papers Session Panel Proposals must be submitted through the INSPIRE system on the AAR website.

If you are looking for collaborators towards proposing a panel session, please feel free to reach out to colleagues on the RISA listserv, to contact the RISA co-chairs for assistance (Sarah Pierce Taylor [sptaylor@uchicago.edu] and Jenn Ortégren [jortegren@middlebury.edu]), or to email the colleagues listed below if there is a topic that is interesting to you.

If you are looking for collaborators towards proposing a panel session, please feel free to reach out to colleagues on the RISA listserv, to contact the RISA co-chairs for assistance (Sarah Pierce Taylor [sptaylor@uchicago.edu] and Jenn Ortégren [jortegren@middlebury.edu]), or to email the colleagues listed below if there is a topic that is interesting to you.

#### 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 <https://risa.arizona.edu/>. 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Jennifer Ortgren, Middlebury College  
jennortgren@gmail.com
- Sarah Pierce Taylor, University of Chicago  
sptaylor@uchicago.edu

## Religion in Southeast Asia Unit

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### Call Text:

The Religion in Southeast Asia Program Unit at the American Academy of Religion invites proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtables. For those interested in proposing organized paper sessions, we would encourage you to consider a 90-minute session with pre-circulated papers. (This can be indicated in your panel proposal.) Continuing our effort to cultivate a greater inclusiveness in the range of topics and participants involved in the Unit's activities, we will favor submissions from both underrepresented groups and those who have never before presented in this Program Unit.

### Topics of special interest for 2021 include:

- Roundtable on work by scholars in Southeast Asia
- Roundtable on recent dissertations
- Material Culture
- Religion and (Environmental)/Social Justice

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Etin Anwar, Hobart and William Smith Colleges  
anwar@hws.edu
- Alexandra Kaloyanides, University of North Carolina, Charlotte  
akaloyan@uncc.edu

## Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit

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Call Text:

The Affect of Crisis:

In Janet Roitman's book *Anti-Crisis*, she notes the theological underpinnings of the notion of crisis, as well as the ways naming certain things as crisis has an effect on the way we understand and address the problem — as discontinuity rather than continuity, for instance. But the subjectivity of crisis makes it no less real. Crisis is an accumulation of pressure, a breaking point, a step beyond the threshold. We seek papers that consider (or deconstruct) crises through the prism of affect; that ask after the affective dimensions of moments of political extremity; that contemplate numbness, incapacitation, burnout, or shock (as a presumed lack of affective responsiveness) as complicated knots for theories of affect; and that wonder about periodization and the affective dimensions — and perhaps the psychic necessity -- of giving moments names.

Betweenness:

In what ways does the form or conduit of betweenness mold our understanding of the subjects or objects between which it flashes? Conversely, what are models of how and why the flow of religious affect/thought is disrupted or blocked? We seek papers that analyze or offer models of "betweenness" or "the in-between" in or of religious affect/thought (doctrinal, olfactory, visual, dialogical, sacramental, discursive, quantum, gravitational, erotic, etc)?

The Felt Materiality of Books:

Books are nothing if not objects of affection: they cull devotions, polarize, or create shared points of contact or provide connective tissue - often irrespective of their contents. We seek papers that address "books," (construed broadly to include manuscripts, archives, and scriptural objects) as material and felt phenomenon, with an eye toward both subjective and collective affects.

On the presidential theme:

Ours is a world of increasingly deep structural inequality. In the US in particular, the divides between have and have nots are chasmic and almost always unbridgeable through the application of neoliberal virtues. The pandemic has made this reality all the more visible in the form of evictions and long food lines. In light of these structural inequalities, we are seeking papers that scrutinize and illuminate the affective currents of charity and gift-giving, especially as they are encoded as forms of piety or religiosity, and especially as they side-step or even perpetuate the very inequalities that they seek to address. Solidarity has been seen as an alternative to the charity model, as it imagines a leveling of hierarchical relation. But might solidarity function affectively and politically in ways similar to charity? We wish to refine and give more texture to the question of what such responses and redresses to material lack do to and for those who partake of them.

Feeling Images: As a co-sponsorship between the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture unit and the Religion, Affect, and Emotion unit, we invite proposals exploring the affective

dimensions of visual imagery and the ways in which a more robust accounting of visuality as an emotionally laden form of (ap)perception might deepen religious studies scholars' understanding of contemporary religious belief and practice. Both theoretical and empirical projects will be considered, but extra consideration will be given to proposals that focus on the neuro-biological underpinnings of affect/emotion and its implications for inter-religious engagement and navigating differences in an increasingly polarized world.

There will also be a book session (co-sponsored with Ancient Fiction and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative) on Maia Kotrosits' *The Lives of Objects: Material Culture, Experience, and the Real in the History of Early Christianity* (Chicago, 2020). Panelists will be invited.

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 passional 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.

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Maia Kotrosits, Denison University  
maiakotrosits@gmail.com
- Tam K. Parker, University of the South  
tparker@sewanee.edu

## Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit

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Call Text:

In addition to general papers and proposals dealing with religion, colonialism, and post-colonialism, we invite papers on the following topics:

- China, Colonialism, Postcolonialism

We invite papers that analyze China – historically and in the present – through the lens of postcolonial studies. We are interested here in both China's increasing transregional and transcontinental role and how a postcolonial lens might be applied to internal Chinese politics and history.

- Decolonizing the Syllabus and Reworking the Canon

We are exploring a possible multi-year focus on actively contributing to a decolonization of religious studies syllabi and to re-working the canon, highlighting and discussing theorists and approaches that are marginalized and deserve closer attention. We are considering multiple ways of doing this: a workshop-like panel discussing e.g. introductory courses in religious studies and actively working on re-writing the syllabus from a decolonial perspective; a panel or roundtable focusing on a particular underestimated theorist and exploring their contribution to the past and future of religious studies. This topic continues to interest us and we are planning on actively working on and pushing for a panel on this for 2021.

- Author(s)-Meet-Critics: Book Panel

We are also planning to have another book panel in 2021, after the successful panels on books by Birgit Meyer, Richard King, Pamela Klassen/Jennifer Graber, Chris Driscoll/Monica Miller, and J. Brent Crosson in the past. Submissions of full panels on a recently published book touching on issues of colonialism and postcolonialism are also welcome, but please contact the co-chairs beforehand if you are interested in developing a book panel with our Unit.

We are also highly interested in papers for a following possible co-sponsored session with the Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Unit:

- Postcolonial Perspectives on Religion and Hip-Hop

We are looking for papers making use of postcolonial theories for an analysis of Religion and Hip-Hop, with a particular interest in Hip-Hop as "diasporic lingua franca" (Fatima El-Tayeb) for dispossessed and marginalized communities and as a tool for de-/anticolonial activism.

Thank you for considering sending a proposal to the Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit and we look forward to hopefully being able to see you in person again in San Diego.

Please note that the Religion, Colonialism and Postcolonialism Unit is deeply committed to inclusion and diversity. Please ensure that any full panel proposals are sensitive in their consideration of a plurality of gendered and racialized voices.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Adrian Hermann, University of Bonn  
adrian.hermann@uni-bonn.de
- Prea Persaud, University of North Carolina, Charlotte  
ppersaud@ufl.edu

## 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 we are committed to diversity and thus strongly encourage the use of world cinema and global visual culture products as well as the gender and ethnic diversity of participants. Additionally we expect presenters to incorporate visual media in presentations and ask that all proposals indicate how visuals will be used. We also ask that proposals be clear about their theoretical and methodological approaches and perspectives.

### 2021 Themes and Topics:

#### Feeling Images

As a co-sponsorship between the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture unit and the Religion, Affect, and Emotion unit, we invite proposals exploring the affective dimensions of visual imagery and the ways in which a more robust accounting of visuality as an emotionally laden form of (ap)perception might deepen religious studies scholars' understanding of contemporary religious belief and practice. Both theoretical and empirical projects will be considered, but extra consideration will be given to proposals that focus on the neuro-biological underpinnings of affect/emotion and its implications for inter-religious engagement and navigating differences in an increasingly polarized world.

For 2021, the Religion, Film, and Visual Arts Unit will hold two postponed panels from 2020.

Pedagogy of Religion and Film  
Korean Cinema

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Kutter Callaway, Fuller Theological Seminary  
kuttercallaway@fuller.edu
- Rebecca Moody, Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
rmoody@wpi.edu

## Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit

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Call Text:

Open Call: "We Charge Genocide"

We invite papers for a possible joint session focused on the seventieth anniversary of the 1951 We Charge Genocide petition, submitted to the United Nations for relief against U.S. abuses of Black citizens. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the legacy and significance of the petition's anniversary, activism under the We Charge Genocide Chicago organization and their report presented to the United Nations Committee Against Torture in 2014, and other related issues and concerns. Co-sponsored with the Religion and Human Rights Unit.

Open Call: Religious Institutions and Genocide

Although access to the recently opened Vatican Archives and the documents of Pope Pius XII has been delayed due to the pandemic, the opening of the archives and the fortuitous premiere of the 2020 film about the Holocaust and the Vatican, *Holy Silence*, by director Steven Pressman, have reinvigorated discussions about the involvement of religious figures and institutions in mass atrocities. We invite papers that address the role of religious institutions in mass atrocities, both as entities that foment violence as well as thwart violence and provide relief. Special co-sponsorship by the United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum.

Open Call: Children and Genocide

We invite papers that explore the treatment and experiences of children affected by genocide and other mass atrocities and human rights violations and the roles religious institutions and individuals have played in shaping the experience of children and/or documenting the hidden voices or experiences of children. "Children" may include child survivors, children born during a mass atrocity, and children born as a result of genocidal rape as well as the mourning of mothers who have lost children or engaged in infanticide.

Open Call: Pandemic Apocalyptic Rhetoric and Conspiracy Theories

We invite papers that explore the proliferation and impact of apocalyptic rhetoric and genocidal conspiracy theories animated by COVID-19 in particular or by other pandemics more generally for comparative purposes to COVID-19. This may include but is not limited to claims that the virus and/or its correlating vaccinations are orchestrated "genocides" against certain groups.

Open Call: COVID-19, Mass Atrocities, and Religion

COVID-19 has not only laid bare and exacerbated inequities, but it is also a threat multiplier for mass atrocities. We invite papers that investigate the dynamics of COVID-19, mass atrocities, and religion. This includes, but is not limited to, how the pandemic has intensified human rights violations against religious groups or what responsibility religious institutions and individuals may have in confronting these threats.

Pre-arranged Book Panel: Laura Levitt's *The Objects That Remain* (Penn State University Press, 2020)

Weaving together an examination of the evidence in police storage of her unsolved rape and an appraisal of artifacts in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Laura Levitt investigates how material objects can be traces of violence and interrogates how we think about evidence as well as its potential for understanding traumatic events and pursuing justice. Panelists will critically assess the book and identify its most significant contributions to research on the intersections of material objects, trauma, and justice research. The author will respond to each panelist's analysis as well as answer questions from session attendees. Possible co-sponsorship with the Women and Religion Unit.

Mission Statement:

The term “genocide” was coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, and in 1948 the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In this context, our Unit treats prominent atrocities of the twentieth century, but topics of interest extend before and after this period as well beyond the legal definition of genocide. This Unit addresses religious aspects of genocidal conflicts, other mass atrocities, and human rights abuses that have made a deep and lasting impact on society, politics, and international affairs. Unit interests also include instructive lessons and reflections that Holocaust and Genocide Studies can lend to illuminating other human rights violations and instances of mass violence and the construal of genocide within a human rights violation spectrum that allows for the study of neglected or ignored conflicts that include a salient religious element. Our work is interdisciplinary and includes scholars from fields including History, Ethics, Theology, Philosophy, Jewish Studies, Church History, Anthropology, Political Science, Gender Studies, and regional area studies of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East.

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Kate E. Temoney, Montclair State University  
temoneyk@montclair.edu
- Benjamin Sax, Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies  
bsax@icjs.org

## 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:

--Afrofuturism

--Mediating hope and the future: as we emerge from a year full of apocalyptic scenarios real and imagined, is there any cause for hope? How is hope and/or the future mediated, and what does religion have to do with it?

--Unlikely/unexpected mediations and/or new ways of conceptualizing mediation in relation to religion: sensational forms, material religion, the body, etc.

--Artificial intelligence

--Mediating COVID/viruses/virality

--Mobile phones and self-surveillance: technologies of self-management and outsourcing life to apps and algorithms with lifestyle apps, bible-reading/prayer/meditation apps, biometrics, contact tracing, etc.

--Cancel culture: how is it mediated through various lenses including religion? What is the role of digital media & authorities in cancel culture?

--Hate mail/male: toxic masculinity, religion, and digital media. How does toxic masculinity marginalize particular groups and intersect with race/ethnicity, citizenship, sexuality, and gender?

--For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religious Conversions unit, we seek individual papers or complete panels that investigate conversion and proselytization by means of digital media, whether by examining change of religious self-identity primarily or exclusively due to online/electronic/virtual means (e.g., social media, religious institutions' websites, gaming sites) or proselytization through on-line, electronic or virtual media (e.g., not "in-person" proselytization).

--For a possible co-sponsored session with the Critical Approaches to Religion and Hip-Hop unit and the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit, we seek individual papers or complete panels that investigate Race, Religion, and Rap in the Digital Age. Women Still Run This Thing! Hip Hop, Womanism, and Collective Meaning-Making Far too often the hypermasculine male is the trope that commercial Hip Hop puts out as "Hip Hop." As scholars in the field of Hip Hop Studies and Womanist Thought, we know this is not true. Women play an influential role in Hip Hop Culture; principally as it pertains to the social constructs of sexual orientation, gender constructs, race, and social issues. This year, we invite papers for a co-sponsorship between the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society and Critical Approaches Religion and Hip Hop. Topics can include, but certainly not limited to:

- Hip Hop womanism
- Hood womanism
- Verzus and Cancel Culture
- Meg Thee Stallion and #ProtectBlackWomen

- Hip Hop of the South
- WAP and politics of sexuality (Cardi B, Meg Thee Stallion)
- Women in Hip Hop & their historical contributions (Missy Elliott, Nikki Minaj, No Name, Rhapsody, etc.)
- Women & their role in activism & politics within the hip hop culture
- The construct of “male sponsorship” for entry into rap music
- Does rap music hate women?
- The gendered & social discourse of “Bitch”
- Hip Hop & #MeToo
- Women in Hip Hop & Digital Technocultures

RMC is committed to diversity and inclusivity. Pre-arranged panels should reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate. 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Kathryn Reklis, Fordham University  
kathryn.reklis@aya.yale.edu
- Deborah Whitehead, University of Colorado  
deborah.whitehead@colorado.edu

## Religion, Memory, History Unit

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### Call Text:

This unit provides an opportunity for scholars to engage in the intersection of religion and memory and history. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras.

This year, our main theme is “homes.” We invite papers, panels, and roundtables that explore religion and memory through the home, including but not limited to examining foodways and holiday practices in domestic settings in any time period and any geographic context, as well as notions of the home or homeland in diasporic traditions.

We also welcome papers, panels, and roundtables on other issues of religion, history, and memory in any time period and any geographic context.

With the Anthropology of Religion unit and the Body and Religion unit:

Our units invite proposals that investigate how pandemics as well as societies’ attempts to manage or mitigate their impact (e.g. quarantines, ways of treating the afflicted, memorializing the dead, etc.) intersect with people’s religious lives, narratives about the past or sites of memory, and embodied experiences by foreclosing certain established practices as well as by opening up new spaces for devotional experimentation and meaning-making. We are especially interested in papers that place contemporary ethnographic work on COVID-19 in conversation with historical cases (and vice-versa), and/or which foreground how different methodological and theoretical approaches might help us make better sense of the roles religion plays under the extraordinary social circumstances of a pandemic.

### Mission Statement:

This unit explores the construction and representation of narratives of the past as memory and history in relation to religious practices, ideologies, and experiences. We encourage critical reflection on religion in relation to ideas of memory, heritage, public history, and historiography. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Rachel Gross, San Francisco State University  
rbgross@sfsu.edu
- Christopher Cantwell, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
christopher.d.cantwell@gmail.com

## Religion, Sport, and Play Unit

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Call Text:

### Shadows, Sins and Profits: Complicating Sport and Play

The intersections of sport, play and religion often give rise to interpretations that romanticize the role, function, meaning and celebrity of particular events, participants, games, sport or play in general. A hearkening back to a time of innocence, a purity of experience, and even a seeking of perfection in body or performance conceals motivations, actions and consequences that cannot easily be reduced to a matter of ethics alone.

This call seeks proposals that address these dimensions of the shadow side, conceived broadly, of sport and play at all levels. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- politicization of sport; commodification of human and animal bodies
- commercializing play; exoticization and mis-representation in team naming and iconography
- ritualizing violence; eugenics and the quest for perfection
- physical and emotional abuse in sports
- risking health for performance and profit
- fans behaving badly; economic injustice—the toll on athletes and communities, etc.

A diverse range of disciplinary perspectives, religious and spiritual traditions, methodologies, and critiques are encouraged.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Carmen Marie Nanko-Fernandez, Catholic Theological Union  
cnanko@ctu.edu
- Jeffrey Scholes, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs  
jscholes@uccs.edu

## Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit

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Call Text:

The Religions in Latina/o Americas Unit is interested in individual paper and pre-arranged panel proposals that advance interdisciplinary and theoretically innovative analyses of Latina/o/x and Latin American religiosities and spiritualities in the Americas. Additionally, we are interested in paper and panel proposals related to the list of topics below, as well book panels, “new format sessions,” and emerging scholarship panels. We also seek individual paper proposals for our co-sponsored session.

Please note: When submitting your proposal, please identify the proposal as either an INDIVIDUAL or PANEL proposal, and please indicate whether you would like to be considered for our co-sponsored panel.

This year, we encourage submissions related to the presidential theme, Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures and how this intersects with religion in the Latina/o Americas and Latinx communities everywhere.

In addition, we are especially interested in papers and panels that address the following topics:

Tejano Religion

The impact of COVID-19 on Latinx communities

Themes from the 2020 Presidential election, especially related to the AAR 2021 theme of Religion, Poverty, and Inequality.

Borders, migration, and Texas

Religion and Authoritarianism in the U.S. and Latin America

Religion and religiosity in Brazil and Brazilian communities throughout the Americas.

African diasporic religion in Latin America and Latino/a/x communities in the U.S.

Islam in Latinx and Latin American communities

Religion and spirituality in Indigenous communities, including transnational communities and connections

Latinx and Latin American queer studies

Religion in the Spanish speaking Caribbean and Latinx Caribbean communities in the US

For a co-sponsored session with the Black Theology Unit, Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit, Liberation Theologies Unit, Religion and Economy Unit, Religion in the Latina/o Americas Unit, Roman Catholic Studies Unit, and Vatican II Studies Unit, we invite proposals for a panel provisionally titled, “Fifty years of Teología de la Liberación – Examining Gustavo Gutiérrez’s influence and the task of the liberation of theology.” In 1971 Gustavo Gutiérrez published the article “Hacia Una Teología de la Liberación”, followed by one of the most influential books of the 20th century, *Teología de la Liberación: Perspectivas*. To mark this year of celebrations, reflections, and conversations on this important anniversary we invite proposals that creatively engage Gutiérrez’s work from a variety of interdisciplinary

lenses and contexts. We especially invite proposals that bring Gutiérrez's contributions in contact with current challenges and future visions of the liberation of theology and theologies that seek to liberate, including problematizing the meaning(s) and praxis of liberation across the theological disciplines.

#### Prearranged Panel Sessions

In addition to accepting INDIVIDUAL paper proposals, our unit will also consider PANEL proposals, which usually consist of 3-4 presenters, along with a moderator and a respondent. In addition to prearranged panel proposals related to our general call and areas of particular interest this year, we also encourage proposals for book panel sessions and emerging scholarship sessions.

#### Book Panel Sessions

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 issues are raised by placing the books in conversation with one another?)

#### Emerging Scholarship Session

We encourage 1) doctoral students and recent Ph.D. graduates working in the area of the Latina/o Americas who 2) have never presented at the national AAR meeting to submit papers. To apply, upload your individual paper proposal in the AAR's PAPERS system, explicitly labeling it as an "Emerging Scholarship" submission.

Membership is not required to submit a proposal in response to the Call for Papers. However, all participants accepted to the program must be current AAR members and registered for the Annual Meeting by June 30, 2020. Membership waivers are available to participants working outside the field of the study of religion or participants from developing nations. Contact the program Unit chair for more details on how to arrange a waiver.

Questions may be directed to the group's co-chairs.

#### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Jessica Delgado, The Ohio State University  
delgado.92@osu.edu
- Daisy Vargas, University of Arizona  
daisyvargas@email.arizona.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 other healing traditions and practices. Proposals should address the social context of the topic, as well as theoretical and analytical frameworks, such as how this analysis helps us to understand religions, medicine, and healing in new ways. For 2021, we welcome any proposal that addresses our goals, and we have a particular interest in the following themes:

1) Faith in a Time of COVID-19: Religion and Public Health Measures: This panel invites papers that consider religious communities' responses to public health measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions on religious gatherings, mask wearing, and vaccine compliance. With attention to the history of medical racism and religious persecution, papers may also explore various communities' experience of health disparities and access to healthcare. We especially welcome proposals addressing these issues from Africana and other Indigenous religious perspectives for potential co-sponsorship with the African Religions unit, the Indigenous Religious Traditions unit, and the Bioethics and Religion unit.

2) The Materiality of Asian Medicines and Religions Compared: This panel, co-sponsored by the Indian and Chinese Religions Compared Unit, invites paper proposals that compare the intersections of Asian medical traditions with Buddhism, Daoism, and/or Hinduism, with a particular focus on the material culture of healing. Topics may include the comparison of medical practices and practitioners, botanical knowledge, other materia medica, geographical routes of transmission, body map illustrations, surgery, merchants and markets, biographies, alchemical practices, gendered bodies, physical movements and bodily hygiene (such as yoga, martial arts, diet, etc.), food, medical records, and other material aspects of healing. Proposals should also attend to related theoretical issues.

3) Mormonism, Medicine, and Healing: This call, co-sponsored with the Mormon Studies Unit, seeks papers that examine the interrelated themes of both units by exploring medicine and healing in the Mormon tradition (broadly defined) from a variety of methodological approaches and historical eras. We especially appreciate papers that can connect their topics to lived traditions and practices among Mormons, past or present.

Graduate Student Award: Graduate students are the future of our profession and contribute substantially to the success of the Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit by delivering papers based on original research. Through the RMH Graduate Student Paper Award, we recognize this contribution and encourage outstanding research by students. Papers will be evaluated for their originality, appropriate use of sources, and the quality of writing. Eligible students must 1) be actively enrolled in a doctoral program and pursuing a research topic in any discipline related to Religions, Medicines, and Healing, 2) have had a paper accepted by the RMH Unit for presentation at the 2021 Annual

Meeting, and 3) have indicated when submitting their proposal that they are applying for the award. Further instructions will be emailed after proposal acceptance.

The Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit is committed to the value of diversity, equity, and social justice in our standards of excellence.

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

#### 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.

#### Method of Submission:

##### INSPIRE

We try to make the proposal acceptance process more transparent but encouraging everyone to submit a formal proposal on INSPIRE.

#### Chairs:

- Kyrah Malika Daniels, Boston College  
kyrah.daniels@bc.edu
- Kristy Slominski, University of Arizona  
kristy.slominski@gmail.com

## Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit

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### Call Text:

The Religion, Social Conflicts, and Peace Unit invites papers to focus on :

- 1) religion, conspiracy theory, and political violence and ways to redress the convergences of religion and conspiracy theory.
- 2) religion, violence, and ecological and environmental justice. How can we theorize religion's relevance to the discourse of environmental justice.
- 3) religion, security, and insecurity: beyond biopolitics and necropolitics

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Santiago H. Slabodsky, Hofstra University  
santiago.slabodsky@hofstra.edu
- Atalia Omer, University of Notre Dame  
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 following topics in which the Religious Conversions Unit is particularly interested in featuring at the 2021 annual meeting:

Deconversions in the context of / related to: the COVID-19 pandemic; professional dislocation due to changes in higher education and downsizing (e.g., department closures); the Spiritual But Not Religions (SBNRs); secularism; atheism; class, race, sexual orientation, gender identity; politics / the political climate (contacts: Linda Mercadante, [lindamercadante@healthybeliefs.org](mailto:lindamercadante@healthybeliefs.org) and/or Edith Szanto, [eszanto@ua.edu](mailto:eszanto@ua.edu) or [edith.szanto@gmail.com](mailto:edith.szanto@gmail.com))

Virtual Conversions with respect to: religion online in various media and platforms; conversion of worship experience in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; changes in personal religious self-identity including multiple religious identity (even beyond multiple religious belonging) through online / virtual / electronic media (contact: Cody Musselman, [cody.musselman@yale.edu](mailto:cody.musselman@yale.edu))

Neuroscientific and Cognitive Scientific approaches to conversion: this panel/call invites papers grounded in cognitive and/or neuroscientific approaches to understanding religious conversion. Potential topics include brain-based technologies for spiritual enhancement (e.g., "Spirit Tech" by Wildman and Stockly); spiritual practices' effects on the brain (e.g., "When God Talks Back" by Tanya Luhrmann); the relationship between mindfulness, meditation and neuroplasticity; and similar topics. This is a potential co-sponsorship with the Cognitive Science of Religion Unit. (contact: Marc Pugliese, [marc.pugliese@saintleo.edu](mailto:marc.pugliese@saintleo.edu)).

Class Consciousness and Conversion: Comparing and/or connecting religious conversion and coming to class consciousness as two modes/forms of "conversion." This is a potential co-sponsorship with the Class, Religion, and Theology Unit: (contact: Edith Szanto, [eszanto@ua.edu](mailto:eszanto@ua.edu) and/or [edith.szanto@gmail.com](mailto:edith.szanto@gmail.com)).

Conversion and Proselytization by Means of Digital Media: We seek individual papers or complete panels that investigate conversion and proselytization by means of digital media, whether by examining change of religious self-identity primarily or exclusively due to online/electronic/virtual means (e.g., social media, religious institutions' websites, gaming sites) or proselytization through on-line, electronic or virtual media (e.g., not "in-person" proselytization). This is a potential co-sponsorship with the Religion, Media, and Culture Unit: (contact: Eliza Kent, [ekent@skidmore.edu](mailto:ekent@skidmore.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)

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Linda A. Mercadante, Methodist Theological School in Ohio  
lindamercadante@healthybeliefs.org
- Marc Pugliese, Saint Leo University  
marcpug@gmail.com

## Ricoeur Unit

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Call Text:

Paul Ricœur and Feminist Hermeneutics after Pamela Sue Anderson

Few scholars have done more to articulate Ricœur's significance for the study of religion, and none has done more to move his thought in the direction of feminist philosophy of religion than Pamela Sue Anderson (1955-2017). Anderson's untimely death at 62 has deprived us of her continuing insights, but her influence on Ricœur studies, feminist hermeneutics, and the philosophy of religion is very much alive. The Ricœur Unit seeks proposals exploring Anderson's influence on Ricœur studies, feminist hermeneutics, ethics, and philosophy of religion. Possible topics include:

- The importance of philosophy for feminist theory and the importance of feminist perspectives in philosophy
- A feminist philosophy of religion
- Concepts of selfhood and identity
- Embodiment
- Vulnerability
- Love, hospitality, and desire
- Epistemic locatedness
- Memory and justice
- Rationality and myth

The Style of the Public Square

Political discourse today has become sharply divisive; and divisive precisely around fault lines defined by religious and secular visions and practices - hypertheism and overhumanization. Scholars in Religion and Humanism have already diagnosed how the problem of "evacuating the center" afflicts current political debate and calls for a third way. Paul Ricoeur, whose work lies at the intersection of religion and humanism, provides a way to understand how to frame the conversational space between these opposing perspectives—even in an increasingly polemicized environment.

This Ricoeur Unit session will focus on the style of political language as a substantive political question. Historically, the study of rhetoric and style has been central to humanism as an intellectual movement. Moreover, Ricoeur studied ideology and utopia as genres of political discourse, wrote an essay on "The Fragility of Political Language," and modeled difficult dialogue among divergent viewpoints in his own writings. The session will question how Ricoeur's approach to language and interpretation can provide tools to counter the reductive thinking that riddles the public sphere.

For this session, we seek proposals that examine contemporary US politics in terms of the style, genre and rhetoric of political language. We invite papers that:

1: Address how Ricoeur's style, which put rival points of view into unexpectedly fruitful conversation, enhance public political debates

- 2: address how Ricoeur provides a model for navigating a public square where religion and humanism can meet as partners in democratic dialogue.
- 3: Analyze how political style embodies particular ideological or policy stances, achieves or impedes political goals, and distorts or enables political dialogue.
- 4: Addresses the normative question of how religious discourse can contribute to renewing democratic dialogue rather than impeding it.

Mission Statement:

The purpose of this Unit is to promote the work of Paul Ricoeur within the broad fields of theology, religious studies, and the study of sacred texts. 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, 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- W. David Hall, Centre College  
wdavid.hall@centre.edu
- Glenn Whitehouse, Florida Gulf Coast University  
gwhiteho@fgcu.edu

## Ritual Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

The Ritual Studies Unit invites individual papers and full panel proposals from a variety of religious and cultural traditions exploring ritual in various local and transnational contexts. We are interested in sessions that experiment with new formats favoring increased interaction and discussion and we particularly encourage papers/presentations that involve actually doing ritual practices.

Whenever possible, our sessions will be formatted to encourage interaction and group discussion on the basis of concise, pre-circulated papers of no more than five pages submitted for The Ritual Studies Unit invites individual papers and full panel proposals from a variety of religious and cultural traditions exploring ritual in various local and transnational contexts. Proposals should engage with ritual theory in some way. We are interested in sessions that experiment with new formats favoring increased interaction and discussion and we particularly encourage papers/presentations that involve actually doing ritual practices.

Whenever possible, our sessions will be formatted to encourage interaction and group discussion on the basis of concise, pre-circulated papers of no more than five pages submitted for circulation by October 15, 2021. Because at least 30 minutes of every session will be reserved for discussion, presentation times will vary in accordance with the number of speakers in the session.

Rites of shared affliction. We invite papers documenting and analyzing ritual practices in response to hardship, misfortune and loss brought about by terrorist attacks, pandemics, natural disasters or environmental disorders.

Getting past the sacred/secular binary. We invite papers that draw on ritual theory and/or ritual practices to suggest ways of getting beyond the tenacious dichotomy between “sacred”, “ritual”, “spiritual”, etc. on the one hand, and “secular”, “everyday”, “profane”, “mundane”, etc. on the other.

Everyday acts of divination in the contemporary West. We are interested in exploring the (often unrecognized) divinatory dimensions of current Western practices relating, among others, to healing, work, education, and online or face-to-face recreative activities.

What political difference do rituals make? We invite papers dealing with rituals in the political arena, ones that may be seen as either upholding existing power structures or as challenging them, such as protests and/or counter-protests, with particular emphasis on issues of effectiveness.

Ritual Theory: We invite papers that engage with the “ritual theory canon.” Relevant papers may be purely theoretical or inspired by particular case studies; they may offer new approaches to understanding and utilizing “canonical” ritual theorists or propose new theoretical resources for ritual studies scholarship. We are particularly interested in the theme of sacrifice as a core element of ritual theory, and in pedagogical strategies and experiences as they relate to issues of ritual theory.

For 2021, the Ritual Studies Unit and the Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit will hold a postponed panel from 2020: Embodied Rituals: Mantra, Tantra and Yoga.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Michael Houseman, École Pratique des Hautes Études  
jmichaelhouseman@gmail.com
- Sarah M. Pike, California State University, Chico  
spike@csuchico.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 topics:

- The intersection of danger or death in sacred texts and how we might assess this intersection from the standpoint of ethics. Proposals should consider dangerous moments in confrontation with a deity or other figure in one or more religious traditions. Readings vary on these texts from confrontation to apologetics. We are particularly interested in new reading strategies and the ways in which theologians and other readers advance interpretations related to ethics.
- How does our national discourse intersect with new adaptations of sacred texts? Given the recent desecration of national political and historical artifacts at our nation's capital, we are interested in papers that explore the role of scripture and its interpretation to exploit racial, social, political, and ideological divisions in our current context.
- Following a successful 2019 panel around our perennial call for papers on sacred texts and material culture, we are interested in sponsoring a related session in 2021 on ethics and the production of physical copies of sacred text. We welcome proposals around the following topics:
  - (a) labor practices connected to the physical production of sacred texts;
  - (b) natural resources and the production of sacred texts;
  - (c) sacred texts and global distribution; and
  - (d) other related topics.
- 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 critically 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.

### Method of Submission:

## INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Tyler Atkinson, Bethany College  
atkinsonts@bethanylboro.edu
- Elizabeth Goldstein, Gonzaga University  
goldstein@gonzaga.edu

## Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction Unit

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### Call Text:

- OPEN CALL: We especially welcome panel proposals of every topic related to the themes of this Unit. As a commitment of this Unit, successful pre-arranged session or panel proposals must be attentive to gender and racial diversity.
- Recent trends, books, or themes in constructive theology.
- Theorists engaging constructive theological or textual thought.
- Papers working on intersectionality, critical race theory, ecocriticism, decolonial studies, disability or gender or sexuality studies.
- We welcome proposals that think with recent entanglements of constructive theology and biblical texts, for a potential panel or papers session. Papers might engage books such as Marc Redfield's *Shibboleth: Judges, Derrida, Celan* (Fordham University Press, 2020), or other recent texts in affect, ecology, or migration studies.
- Papers or panels that wrestle with the Presidential Theme: Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures, particular focused on the "Collective Futures" theme. Papers engaging futurity, queer futurity, utopianism, pessimism, Afropessimism, and other critical intersectional and temporal perspectives will be considered.
- We plan for a pre-arranged Book Review Panel on Catherine Keller's forthcoming *Facing Apocalypse: Climate, Democracy and Other Last Chances* (Orbis 2021).
- A roundtable session scheduled on the NRSV-Updated Edition for last year and postponed is tentatively scheduled for 2021.
- We also plan for a possible pre-arranged co-sponsorship with the Class, Religion and Theology Unit.

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Robert Seesengood, Albright College  
rseesengood@albright.edu
- Filipe Maia, Boston University  
fmaia@bu.edu

## Schleiermacher Unit

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Call Text:

### (1) Book Panel: Schleiermacher's Plato (possible cosponsorship with Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit)

The Schleiermacher Unit will be sponsoring a book panel on the forthcoming volume *Schleiermacher's Plato* (De Gruyter, 2021) by Julia Lamm. This volume considers Friedrich Schleiermacher's historic translation and interpretation of Plato's dialogues, exploring both the impact of Plato's thought in shaping Schleiermacher's theology and the longstanding influence of Schleiermacher's translation upon modern interpretations of Plato. Panelists will be invited.

### (2) Affect, Embodiment, and Theological Understanding

What is the role of affect, feeling, and embodiment in the generation of theological symbols and doctrines? How do religious affects reflect broader economic, political, and social dynamics? Schleiermacher's theology offers intriguing points of connections with recent work in affect theory, with his well-known emphases on feeling and intuition and his description of doctrines as religious affections set forth in speech. For this session, we invite proposals for individual papers and pre-arranged panels that explore the interplay between theology and affect theory, and which consider the role of embodied experience, feeling, desire, religious stirrings, and everyday affective relations in shaping theological inquiry and understanding. We are particularly interested in proposals that consider perspectives that unsettle modern theological emphases on individual subjectivity and inwardness and which highlight the social, cultural, and interpersonal dimension of religious affects.

### (3) Reconsidering Christ, Sin, and Atonement (Co-sponsored with Liberation Theologies Unit)

Schleiermacher's theology turns on the central relation to Christ as redeemer, yet he also maintains that understandings of Christ and atonement must continue to develop in light of new questions and challenges. Together with the 2021 AAR Annual Meeting theme of religion, poverty, and inequality, we invite proposals that consider fresh approaches to christology, atonement theory, and sin and redemption. We especially welcome perspectives that attend to pressing challenges of systemic poverty, racial and gender inequality, and classism. For example, proposals might:

- examine social, structural, and cultural dimensions of sin
- develop liberationist theological perspectives on sin and redemption
- consider the critical interplay of race, christology, and Christian identity
- consider postcolonial theological reflections on christology and supersessionism
- constructively and/or critically engage Schleiermacher's work on Christ, sin, and redemption

The Schleiermacher Unit is committed to diversity and inclusivity. Pre-arranged sessions or panel proposals should reflect diversity of gender and/or race and ethnicity. Diversities of rank, method, and sub-discipline are also highly encouraged.

Mission Statement:

The unit promotes scholarship – from specialists and non-specialists alike – that critically engage the thought and influence of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). We encourage constructive, historical, and textual analyses that open new lines of inquiry into Schleiermacher's oeuvre and contribution to contemporary discussions in theology, religious studies, philosophy, ethics, and hermeneutics.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Kevin Vander Schel, Gonzaga University  
vanderschel@gonzaga.edu

## Science, Technology, and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

Touch, skin, and surfaces- what role does touch play in religious practice? How might a scientific understanding of touch inform religious perspectives that emphasize embodiment? What has the lack of touch in the pandemic revealed about the tactile dimension of religious life?

Conspiracy theories, science, and religion. How best to understand popular religious skepticism of scientific authority (e.g., religious skepticism of masks/vaccines)? How does social mistrust impact the work of science and religion scholars? How does one responsibly 'critique' scientific discourse in an age of conspiracy theories?

Popular physics and spirituality- how might popular physics books be seen as a form of spirituality? How well do these books track developments in physics? Is it ever epistemically appropriate to use physics in this way?

Big data (co-sponsored with Ethics Unit)- The accumulation and analysis of big data is touted as harboring immense new economic, political, and medical power. We invite papers exploring the potential use and ethical significance of big data for religious traditions. We are particularly interested in proposals that examine whether religious ethical traditions have sufficient resources to assess the collection, interpretation, and use of big or require fundamental conceptual and theological innovation to do so.

Science and Religion in a time of Pandemic- how do scientific and religious explanations (e.g., providence, chance, natural causation) of the COVID-10 Pandemic complement or exist in tension with each other? What has the pandemic changed/revealed about beliefs toward science and religion in society? How has the pandemic accelerated changes in work/relationships and what will be the long term-consequences of the shift?

Racism and Science and Religion- How has the authority of science been used to further racism (e.g., eugenics, technological disparities, genetic engineering)? In what ways does this legacy carry over in science and scholarship today? What assumptions should be challenged? How has the cultural category of 'race' circulated (or been ignored) in writings on science, technology, and religion?

Religions and the sciences: how might a truly multi-religious (as opposed to "Christian" and "non-Christian religions") approach to science change the questions that scholars normally address? As scholars engage with particular sciences and particular religious traditions, are there ways to engage multiple religious traditions in defensible ways?

Finally, STR is always open to paper proposals or panels that do not fit any of these particular parameters.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Greg Cootsona, California State University, Chico  
gcootsona@csuchico.edu
- Josh Reeves, Samford University  
jareeves@samford.edu

## Scriptural Reasoning Unit

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### Call Text:

For the 2021 AAR, we are accommodating two sessions that were postponed last year. For this reason we will not be accepting any new paper proposals. Our first session will be an invited roundtable on Plural Methods in Interreligious Engagement and the second session will be a Scriptural Reasoning Session reflecting on Disease and Distancing in the Abrahamic traditions with papers submitted last year.

### Mission Statement:

Scriptural Reasoning (SR) is a practice of inter-religious text study in which participants from the three 'Abrahamic' religions (and increasingly, from other traditions as well) study short selections of their scriptures together in an open-ended but structured manner. When scholars read scripture across inter-religious difference, the effect is to put traditional wisdom and academic formation into play simultaneously. Over the years, this practice has proved effective at making familiar texts strange and offering a window into the deep patterns of reasoning and implicit logics of these different traditions.

The Scriptural Reasoning Unit facilitates a unique mode of academic engagement within the setting of the AAR, rooted in this distinctive practice. It cultivates an approach to the academic study of scriptural traditions centered on the ways in which scriptures generate communities of religious practice: practices of study, of interpretation, of reflection, of ritual, and of social life. Its scholars seek to develop methods for analyzing aspects of this process and to offer philosophical or theological interventions in the ongoing life of the traditions.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Ashleigh Elser, Hampden-Sydney College  
aelser@hsc.edu
- Mark James, Hunter College  
mcjames@caspia.com

## Secularism and Secularity Unit

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### Call Text:

1. A possible co-sponsored session with Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit on religion, secularism, and the ontological turn. We encourage interdisciplinary proposals that bring together questions of difference and ontology as they've recently been theorized by scholars of affect studies, decolonial and postcolonial theory, and critical studies of religion and science.
2. A possible author-meets-critics session on the work of Janet Jakobsen, particularly her recent monograph *The Sex Obsession: Perversity and Possibility in American Politics* (NYU, 2020)
3. A roundtable on future directions for the study of secularism/secularity. This panel, originally scheduled for AAR 2020, is designed to bring together junior and established scholars for a conversation on the topic. While some of its participants will roll over from the previous year, we also invite emerging scholars making interventions in interdisciplinary secular studies to put forward proposals for inclusion on this panel.

### 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 group 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Lucia Hulsether, Skidmore College  
lhulseth@skidmore.edu
- Bradley Onishi, Skidmore College  
bradley.b.onishi@gmail.com

## Sikh Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

2020 was an unprecedented year. The Covid-19 pandemic revealed and exacerbated inequalities along racial, class, caste, gender, and religious lines. The move to life online was accompanied by increased corporate and state surveillance. Ethno-religious nationalisms, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy resurfaced in the public sphere. Protest and activism by groups such as Black Lives Matter and the kisaan morcha produced representations (and criminalization) of racial and religious minorities. At the same time, minoritarian groups enjoyed increased solidarity and allyship across racial and religious lines, and seva took on new forms. How does the work of Sikh Studies address inequalities and inequities in the public sphere? In what ways might Sikh Studies scholarship intersect with activism and movement building? What are the potential possibilities and problems of such interactions? The Sikh Studies Unit invites papers that interrogate these themes and related questions, and papers that explore engagement between Sikhism and other racial and religious groups.

### Sikh Studies Unit and Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit Co-Sponsored Session

#### Sikhs and Sikhism in North America

The Sikh Studies Unit and the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit invite papers on Sikhs and Sikhism in North America. While proposals must include a North American component, we welcome proposals that explore Sikh experience across geographical boundaries, and encourage proposals from a wide range of methodological and disciplinary approaches. In their consideration of the development and transformation of Sikhism in North American diasporic contexts, proposals may address a variety of themes, including gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, space, politics, activism, literature, arts, education and practices. How has transnationalism shaped the production of Sikh beliefs, practices, and institutions or conceptions of Sikhism in North America? How do Sikhs and Sikhism engage with liberal ideologies (e.g. secularism) or public policies (e.g. multiculturalism) in the North American diaspora? In what ways has Sikh self-understanding and engagement been informed by their North American contexts?

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Michael Hawley, Mount Royal University  
mhawley@mtroyal.ca
- Nirinjan Khalsa, Loyola Marymount University  
nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu

## Sociology of Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

The purpose of the Sociology of Religion Unit of the American Academy of Religion is to generate cross-fertilization between the Sociology of Religion and Religious Studies. We are open to papers in all areas and therefore encourage submissions of any topic relevant to the sociology of religion. This year, we are particularly interested in the following topics:

- Topics related to the AAR presidential theme of religion, poverty, and inequality
- Topics related to Texas and borderlands (e.g., religion and politics, religious identity and voting patterns, Latinx and Asian migration, evangelical-Catholic interactions) [for possible co-sponsorship with Religion and Politics Unit]
- Sociology of religion in a time of crisis (Covid-19, Black Lives Matter, climate change, political division): could include effects on research methods, institutions, individuals
- Digital technologies, social media, and mediated religion (e.g., data collection, modes of research, religious use of technology, technology's influence on religion)
- Transnational and comparative research (including modernization, migration, geopolitics, religious nationalisms, public sphere, etc.)
- The social construction of religio-racial identities and other intersectional identities
- The influence of funding sources and IRBs on research
- Quantitative research
- Method and theory in the sociology of religion

### Procedure:

All proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria: a descriptive title; a clearly formulated argument; clearly identified methodology and sources; engagement with relevant secondary literature; explicit articulation of an original contribution to the field; relevance to our unit's CFP; potential for co-sponsorships with other units. Further suggestions for AAR proposal writers can be found in Kecia Ali's "Writing a Successful Annual Meeting Proposal." Anonymity: Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during initial review, but visible prior to final acceptance or rejection.

### Diversity and Inclusion:

Diversity and inclusion are core values of the Sociology of Religion Unit. For this reason, we encourage organizers of pre-formed panels to invite participants that are diverse in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, age, religion, region, discipline, methodology, professional status, and type of institution. In addition, we especially welcome proposals that focus on communities that have been historically underrepresented, including African, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and non-Christian communities, as well as on regions outside North America and Europe. In panel and paper proposals, we also welcome a diversity of methodologies, including quantitative, qualitative, historical, and theoretical.

When preparing your panel or roundtable proposal, please include the demographic data you provide to the AAR and explain how your panel's participants instantiate diversity.

Publication:

The Sociology of Religion Unit regularly co-sponsors panels with the peer-reviewed journal *Critical Research on Religion* (<http://crr.sagepub.com>), published by SAGE Publications. Presenters of promising papers in SOR panels may be invited to turn their papers into articles and submit them for peer review to CRR.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Dusty Hoesly, University of Southern Mississippi  
hoesly@ucsb.edu
- Elaine Howard Ecklund, Rice University  
ehe@rice.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 and place as they relate to, condition, and constitute 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 place 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:

### Scale and Space

Exploring issues of large space (continent, country) to small (church pew). Paper topics could include digital humanities, GIS, and methodologies of studying space and place in varying scales.

San Antonio: This session explores San Antonio as a transcultural “contact zone” where:

- encounter and exchange between people of varied religio-racial identities, communities, and cultures has led to a dynamic and hybrid religious history
- The violence of colonial conquests, forced religious conversions, the transatlantic slave trade, and US expansionism are central to the “imperial formations” (Ann Laura Stoler) of the city both past and present
- The above factors have profoundly impacted both the built environment and the natural landscape, flora, and fauna
- as well as the production and commemoration of imperial myths alongside de and postcolonial religio-racial narratives and ways of being, belonging, and meaning-making that challenge and resist them

This session aims to interrogate these dynamics - at various historical periods, spatial scales, and through the human and non human - and the religio-racial histories, narratives, and myths constructed in and through the landscape of San Antonio.

### Space & Prayer in Motion

Density, diversity, and movement characterize urban space. We seek papers about the city as a setting for spirituality, and especially about the way those who pray make use of urban environments. How do city spaces set prayer in motion or bring prayer into public view? We also welcome papers addressing how race, gender, class, accessibility, and religious difference shape the dynamics of urban mobility in such situations. Possible topics might include prayer walking, prayer in schools, public religious activities, the role technologies of movement play in these activities, and public spaces such as roads and plazas used for prayer. (co-sponsorship with Religion and Cities)

### Pop-Up Sacrality

In the midst of a pandemic, practices of faith and spirituality have needed to be altered

to create safe spaces for worship and devotion that still meet the needs of practitioners. What have these spaces looked like, what rituals have been maintained and/or created/developed, what issues have practitioners needed to consider, and how will these innovative devotions and worship opportunities shape spiritual and religious communities in a post-pandemic world?

Topics to consider:

- Creative Imaginings of Sacredness:
  - o Outdoor Worship
  - o Changes in Rituals of Devotion
  - o Spirituality at Home
- Spirituality Online:
  - o Virtual Retreats
  - o Religious Services
  - o Reading Groups
  - o Studies of Texts
  - o Virtual Wellness -- Yoga, Mindfulness, etc.
- Consecration and Sanitization
  - o How Sacred Spaces are Sanitized for Safe Gatherings
  - o Consecrating Virtual and Outdoor Spaces
  - o Hand-free Greetings
  - o Chaplaincy at a Distance

The Economics of Religious Spaces

How are religious spaces created or maintained based on economic models (donation, marketing, promotion)? Can these varying economic models be compared across and within religions and denominations? How have fundraising needs and philanthropic support shaped sites? Alternatively, how have critiques of money and religion affected religious sites and spaces? Topics for this panel could also include how the economic realities of COVID-19 have led to the shuttering or reimagining of space by religious groups or religiously oriented charities; how the Coronavirus pandemic exacerbated class-based differences in religious spaces; etc. (co-sponsorship with Religion and Economics Unit)

Buddhist Tourism outside of Asia

Building on Brooke Schedneck's and Courtney Bruntz's Buddhist Tourism in Asia, this panel's papers could link to the volume's themes of secularism and the sacred, tourist imaginaries and place-making, and commodification in Asia, compared with Buddhist tourist sites outside of Asia. Other possible topics might include how Buddhist tourist sites are created in the West, the ways Buddhist tourist sites adapt to locations outside of Asia, and financial and economic models of Buddhist tourism in diasporic communities.

(co-sponsorship Buddhism in the West Unit)

## Fieldwork and Place

How does space affect fieldwork? This panel would tell the backstory of fieldwork. Panelists should reflect on their experiences doing fieldwork and how the natural and built environment affected research and results. We are hoping for a lively conversation, which could be proposed as a roundtable.

The role of sacred places in contemporary European society and culture.

Responses toward sacred places often reveal unarticulated attitudes toward the place and role of religious minorities and implicit frames of reference toward debates on religion and secularism. We seek papers that reflect on particular sacred sites, including their symbolic, material, and theoretical dimensions; programs and practices toward protecting, preserving, and/or mythologizing sacred places and religious heritage; practices of pilgrimage, with special reference to the new realities of brought on by COVID travel restrictions; and new frameworks for reflecting on the role of sacred places in 21st century European society and culture. (co-sponsorship with Religion in Europe Unit)

## 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.

## Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

## Chairs:

- Katie Oxx, Saint Joseph's University  
koxx@sju.edu
- Brooke Schedneck, Rhodes College  
schedneckb@rhodes.edu

## Special Session

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Call Text:

A limited number of special sessions are approved by the Program Committee each year. These are intended to be:

- Sessions that are experimental, creative, or timely
- Sessions that address an area of interest that does not naturally fall within the purview of one or more existing Program Units
- Sessions that address a current issue/event of interest to multiple AAR constituencies.

The Program Committee occasionally approves special sessions for sessions that would be one-time only or special to the year or location. Under exceptional circumstances, special sessions may also be proposed to address a pressing issue that arises after the proposal deadline.

Guidelines for special sessions:

- Special sessions are accepted through INSPIRE only.
- Special session proposals must provide a rationale based on the criteria above.
- Special sessions must use one of the prearranged session proposal formats (papers session or roundtable).
- Make sure the special 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 both as a special session and also to a program unit, it will be eliminated from consideration as a special session.
- The Program Committee evaluates all Special Session proposals. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by April 1, 2021.

Mission Statement:

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Whitney Bauman, Florida International University  
whitneyabauman@mac.com
- Robert Puckett, American Academy of Religion  
rpuckett@aarweb.org

## Student Lounge Roundtable

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Call Text:

Statement of Purpose:

The Student Lounge Roundtable Series (SLRS) consists of a series of roundtable conversations and workshops dedicated to the professional development and current needs of graduate students. These roundtable conversations and 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 traditional conference presentations, the SLRS workshops should stimulate discussion and learning over a particular area of focus. The Graduate Student Committee (GSC) sponsors this series. The workshops 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 INSPIRE system.

Call for Papers:

The Student Lounge Roundtable Series (SLRS) consists of a series of roundtable conversations and workshops dedicated to the professional development and current needs of graduate students. These roundtable conversations and 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 traditional conference presentations, the SLRS workshops should stimulate discussion and learning over a particular area of focus. The Graduate Student Committee (GSC) sponsors this series. The workshops are led by graduate students, professors, and other professionals with relevant expertise to offer.

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:

- Publicly-engaged scholarship and public-facing writing
- Activism and the academy
- 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
- Coping with the mental and emotional pressures of graduate school and/or the job search
- Strategies for thriving as a member of an underrepresented community in the academy

- Creating or managing an online presence (websites, blogging, online portfolios, etc.)
- Job market (applications, interviews, etc.)
- Careers outside of the academy
- Publishing (open access vs. peer review; alternative forms of publishing, etc.)
- Teaching (activities, online, technology, controversial issues, etc.)
- Networking
- Grant-writing
- CV writing
- Strategies for handling the pressures of graduate school in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

Please note: Submissions to the SLRS do NOT count toward the two-proposal submission limit within the INSPIRE system.

Please send a brief proposal (~150 words) and a CV to Kaitlyn Lindgren-Hansen ([kaitlyn-lindgren@uiowa.edu](mailto:kaitlyn-lindgren@uiowa.edu)) and Josefrayn Sanchez-Perry ([jsanchezperry@utexas.edu](mailto:jsanchezperry@utexas.edu)) by March 1, 2021 and indicate if you are willing to co-present if your topic aligns with another proposal. Roundtable time slots are flexible. If accepted, please be prepared to create a short video to be used by the GSC for publicity purposes prior to the annual conference.

#### Mission Statement:

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

#### Method of Submission:

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)

#### Chairs:

- Kaitlyn Lindgren-Hansen, University of Iowa  
[kaitlyn-lindgren@uiowa.edu](mailto:kaitlyn-lindgren@uiowa.edu)

- Josefrayn Sanchez-Perry, University of Texas at Austin  
jsanchezperry@utexas.edu

## 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 an 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 is accepted and you agree to be on the program, we expect you to show up to participate in your session at the Annual Meeting, barring unforeseeable exceptional circumstances. Please note that the Islamic studies program Units have a policy according to which no-shows may be barred from the program for the following year.

For the 2021 meeting in San Antonio, we are also especially interested in paper and/or panel proposals on:

- 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.
- graduate session: This session will offer graduate students the opportunity to present for 5 minutes on their dissertation research, followed by short responses from other panelists and open discussion. If you are an advanced graduate student and interested in talking succinctly about your research in 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 special session format at the top of the proposal;
- joy, life, love, beauty in Islamic and Muslim contexts
- Indigeneity, Settler-Colonialism, and Decoloniality in Islamic Studies"?)
- Islamic Studies beyond the North American academy; perspectives from the Global South
- methods in studying Islam/Muslims through social media, digital ethnography, and other digital mediums
- co-sponsored panel with Cultural History of Religion Unit: Twenty Years Since the Towers: 9/11 as an Event in the History of the Discipline –The 2001 al-Qaeda attacks on various US sites were not just an event of political and cultural significance, prompting virulent Islamophobia, new regimes of profiling and racializing religion, and a

reformulation of US empire. It was also a major event in the history of the study of religion, prompting several long-overdue reckonings in the discipline. The years that followed saw a thoroughgoing critique of the secularization thesis; a renewed engagement with questions of religious literacy and public scholarship; and a sophisticated new body of work across the various fields of Islamic studies. We invite paper and panel proposals that revisit this formative moment on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary. What histories of this moment have yet to be told? What opportunities were missed? Where do we stand now?

Mission Statement:

This Unit is a 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 enduring interests in pedagogical issues associated with the teaching of Islam and prioritizes, through two signature sessions, mentoring of early-career scholars. 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 often coordinate our work with other Islam-related AAR Program Units, including the Contemporary Islam Unit, the Islam, Gender, Women Unit, the Islamic Mysticism Unit, Teaching Islamophobia Unit, and the Qur'an Unit.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Elliott Bazzano, Le Moyne College  
bazzanea@lemoyne.edu
- Zaid Adhami, Williams College  
za2@williams.edu

## Study of Judaism Unit

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### Call Text:

This Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtables dealing with Judaism, Jews, and Jewish studies broadly conceived – from late antiquity to the present, in multiple global settings, and employing various methodologies – that address topics of concern to the broader community of religious studies scholars. Pre-arranged session or panel proposals should aim to represent a diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, and academic rank.

We are open to any proposals related to the study of Judaism, although for 2021, we are particularly interested in the following topics:

- Jewish approaches to physical, social, and/or ecological “health” and flourishing
- Varieties of digital Judaism before and after the Zoom revolution
- Judaism, critical race theory, and intersectionality
- The study of Judaism, public scholarship, and/or the crisis in the humanities
- Work by graduate students and/or recent PhDs for a session of pre-circulated papers
- 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the film *Fiddler on the Roof* and The Study of Judaism and Religion and Popular Culture Units are co-sponsoring a call for papers exploring the film; the Broadway show and its many revivals, including amateur and international productions; and the *Sholem Aleichem* stories. We are particularly interested in theoretically driven papers, including those that question the politics of nostalgia, the universalizing of the shtetl, and gender and sexuality.

### 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 cosponsorship 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 studies scholars in general, including community and commitment, gender, and the intersection between religion and politics. Finally, we actively pursue cosponsorship with other AAR Program Units. Recently, we have worked with the Study of Islam Unit, the Mysticism Unit, the Animal Studies Unit, and several SBL Sections. In the future, we

look forward to continuing to work with various AAR – and whenever possible, SBL – Program Units.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Andrea Dara Cooper, University of North Carolina  
adcooper@email.unc.edu
- Shari Rabin, Oberlin College  
srabin@oberlin.edu

## Tantric Studies Unit

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Call Text:

For 2021, the Tantric Studies Unit will its postponed sessions from 2020.

- Tantra in the "Me Too" Era  
(contact: Christa Kuberry [ckuberry@yogaalliance.org](mailto:ckuberry@yogaalliance.org))
- Yoga and Tantra  
(contact: Ben Williams [bwilliams@naropa.edu](mailto:bwilliams@naropa.edu))
- Tantra and Bhakti  
(contact: Seth Ligo [sethligo@gmail.com](mailto:sethligo@gmail.com))
- Tantra in Bengal and Assam: Śāktas, Bāuls, Sahajiyās, Yogis and Faqirs  
(contact: June McDaniel [McdanielJ@cofc.edu](mailto:McdanielJ@cofc.edu) )
- Gender Performance in Tantra  
(contact: Patricia Sauthoff [sauthoff@gmail.com](mailto:sauthoff@gmail.com))
- Tantra and Film  
(contact: Rachel McDermott [rmcdermo@barnard.edu](mailto:rmcdermo@barnard.edu))
- Tantra and Ritual Language  
(contact: Jackson Stephenson [jbj@ucsb.edu](mailto:jbj@ucsb.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 phenomena 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Gudrun Buhnemann, University of Wisconsin  
gbuhnema@wisc.edu
- Glen Hayes, Bloomfield College  
glen\_hayes@bloomfield.edu

## Teaching Religion Unit

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### Call Text:

#### Teaching Religion: Using Anti-racist Pedagogies

The Teaching Religion Unit and the Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit invite proposals for a co-sponsored session on teaching religion using anti-racist pedagogies. Addressing race, racism, and White privilege in religious studies and theology classes is imperative in today's world. However, discussions and assignments related to these themes can vary drastically from one institutional context to another and may prove to be fraught for students and faculty alike. This session will feature reflections about--and possible demonstrations of--innovative and transformative ways of incorporating anti-racist pedagogies into the classroom. We are especially interested in papers that showcase how alternative approaches to teaching may challenge the boundaries between scholarship and activism, as well as how faculty meet heightened demands for transformative pedagogy fostered by students' desire to reflect on their engagement in activism and protest movements.

#### Teaching World Christianities

The Teaching Religion Unit and the World Christianity Unit invite proposals for a possible co-sponsored session on teaching World Christianity. We are especially interested in papers that discuss (and possibly demonstrate) effective assignments, activities, or pedagogical approaches to teaching Christianity as a world religion as it is practiced in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific, as well as in diasporic communities in the West. Papers might address topics such as pedagogical approaches to decolonizing World Christianity, teaching in/about the diaspora, or other themes.

#### Teaching and Poverty

In keeping with the 2021 Presidential Theme of "Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures," the Teaching Religion Unit and the Teaching and Learning Committee invite paper proposals for a co-sponsored session on teaching and poverty. Possible intersections of these topics might include:

- Team-teaching poverty and religion
- Poverty as an interdisciplinary focus
- Reconceiving teaching religion around poverty
- Teaching first generation college students
- The Pandemic and Poverty, e.g. issues with going virtual

#### Teaching Tactics with "A Proven Practice"

We invite the demonstration of a teaching tactic with audience participation. In your proposal, please use the format described at "A Proven Practice" and briefly explain how you would demonstrate the tactic in the allotted time (approximately 10 minutes). Tactics may focus on a variety of teaching practices, including (but not limited to) online/hybrid teaching and learning and on community-engaged teaching and learning,

especially during the pandemic. Find the format via “A Proven Practice” here: <https://bit.ly/2XOVdm3>

#### Using Virtual Reality to Teach about Religions

Recognizing that remote and asynchronous instruction during the pandemic have impacted how instructors incorporate the site visit into their teaching, we welcome papers that consider the pedagogical use of virtual reality (VR), such as VR site visits or tours, for a session possibly held in VR.

#### Teaching Religion, the Body, and Sexuality

The Teaching Religion Unit and the Religion and Sexuality Unit invite potential contributions for a potential co-sponsored session about Religion, the Body, and Sexuality (Hoel, Wilcox, Wilson) <https://www.routledge.com/Religion-the-Body-and-Sexuality-An-Introductio...> Proposals should emphasize specific ways in which this text has inspired or might inspire innovative pedagogy about religion, the body, and sexuality.

#### Religion & Public Life: Perspectives from the Centers

In a pre-arranged panel, representatives from Centers focused on religion and public life will discuss public outreach, education, and programming. They will share best practices and reflect on the value of public engagement and scholarship.

#### Podcasting is Pedagogy

Podcasting is now a mainstream media platform worth upwards of a billion dollars that reaches one in four Americans weekly. For academics studying religion, what is the role of podcasting as a medium for public scholarship and as a tool for the classroom? This roundtable, featuring representatives from six diverse podcasts about religion, will highlight the depth, breadth, and diversity of understandings of how podcasting is pedagogy. This session was postponed from 2020.

#### Open call

We invite proposals for individual papers and panel sessions 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.

#### 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.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Molly Bassett, Georgia State University  
mbassett@gsu.edu
- Kate DeConinck, University of San Diego  
kdeconinck@sandiego.edu

## Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit

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### Call Text:

This year, the bulk of the Unit's programming will consist of sessions that were deferred due to Covid-19. There is, however, the possibility that individual papers and perhaps even an entire session may be switched out, and we encourage anyone who is hoping to work with our group this year to contact the Co-Chairs before submitting a proposal.

### 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, and we are particularly interested to expand our offerings in Judaism, Islam, and marginalized traditions (such as witchcraft) in coming years. Contact the Program Unit Chairs if you seek further information on the Unit’s activities.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Anthony Paul Smith, La Salle University  
anthonypaul.smith@gmail.com
- Beatrice Marovich, Hanover College  
beatrice.marovich@gmail.com

## Theology and Religious Reflection Unit

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### Call Text:

For the American Academy of Religion's Annual Meeting in 2021, the Theology and Religious Reflection unit of AAR invites proposals for individual papers and paper panels on:

1. Religious and theoretical reflection on pandemics, especially SARS-CoV-2 and HIV/AIDS. We are also interested in papers that examine local epidemics (like cholera) or endemic challenges (like tuberculosis). Papers and panels examining questions of temporality, sociality, contagion, rituals, and borders are especially welcome.
2. The significance of naming Blackness: as a name, as ontology or anti-ontology, as ground and horizon, as life, death in life, and life in death.
3. Practices and theories of solidarity. If, as scholars like Janet Jakobsen and Ruth Wilson Gilmore have argued, solidarity emerges out of sociopolitical struggle rather than being the antecedent condition of such struggle, how do we learn what solidarity is? Does its scope change in different struggles? Is it still a useful organizing image, or does it too quickly elide the reality of differences within social struggles?
4. Proposals for a panel on R. A. Judy's *Sentient Flesh: Thinking in Disorder, Poiesis in Black* (Duke, 2020).
5. Technologies of touch across religious traditions. How is touch thought? What are the works and affects of touch? (Engagements with Liane Carlson's *Contingency and the Limits of History* [Columbia University Press, 2019] are also welcome.)
6. For a co-sponsored session with the Religion and Disability Studies Unit, we seek presentations that use the lens of 'disability' either to interpret or to reimagine embodied religious practices such as meditation, yoga, prayer, dance, or other ritual performances.
7. What are the potentials of genre and style for theological and religious reflection? What might an "unwieldy stylistics" (Michael Cobb) make possible as knowledge or scholarship?
8. Violence, activism, and conflict, including the metaphors of violence as well as ideas and representations of violence in the time of Black Lives Matter and SARS-CoV-2.
9. Proposals for a panel on the significance of David Scott's work for theology and religious reflection (including any of his edited work, *Small Axe*, and books: *Stuart Hall's Voice*, *Conscripts of Modernity*, *Refashioning Futures*, *Formations of Ritual*).

### 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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Rakesh Peter-Dass, Hope College  
rpeterdass@gmail.com
- Linn Tonstad, Yale University  
linn.tonstad@yale.edu

## Theology of Martin Luther King Jr. Unit

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Call Text:

Session: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Political Economy  
90 Minutes

In accordance with the theme for AAR 2021, “Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures,” the Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. Unit invites papers that interrogate the relationship between the political economy and better human and planetary futures. Toward this end, we invite papers that reflect on Martin Luther King’s vision of an equitable world and ethics framed in terms of political economy, such as political theology of money/transaction, the wealth gap, universal basic income, and economic infrastructures that stand in opposition to King’s notion of the beloved community. The papers may ask: How does the study of religion open new avenues for the analysis of poverty and growing inequalities? What do sacred texts say about the condition of the world’s poor as well as the status and responsibility of its wealthy? Papers should place King in conversation with other thinkers who propose other futures via a critique of current political economy that lead toward economic inequalities and social inequities.

Session: The Black Social Gospel Tradition and the “Spiritual Left.”  
120 Minutes  
Co-Sponsored with Ethics Unit

In accordance with the theme for AAR 2021, “Religion, Poverty, and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures,” the Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. Unit invites papers that examine theologies and ideologies that resist social inequalities and re-imagine different worlds and other futures. To achieve this goal, we seek proposals that place King in dialogue with a Black Social Gospel tradition and the rise of the spiritual left. The most recent Georgia senatorial race, for example, put on display a Black Social Gospel theology as performed in the ministry and politics of Rev. Raphael Warnock, who pastors a church once led by King. Issues such as universal healthcare, worker’s rights, political disenfranchisement, and equal education standards, are deemed as “radical” by the so-called “Christian right.” We invite papers to consider the “radical” and the “extreme” in the thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. How might reading King in the Black Social Gospel tradition and the spiritual left lend insight into a theology that imagines our collective future? We invite papers to reflect creatively on this theme and take up a host of issues that shed light on new ways of reading the Black Social Gospel and the spiritual left.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Hak Joon Lee, Fuller Theological Seminary  
hjlee@fuller.edu
- Leonard McKinnis, University of Illinois  
leonardm@illinois.edu

## Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit

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Call Text:

Losar Tashi Delek!

The Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit welcomes proposals for panel sessions, individual papers, and roundtables in all areas of the study of Tibetan and Himalayan Religions. The presidential theme for 2021 proposed by AAR President, Marla Frederick, is Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures. By which President Frederick asks, "How does the study of religion open new avenues for the analysis of poverty and growing inequalities? What do sacred texts say about the condition of the world's poor as well as the status and responsibility of its wealthy? How do such scripts inform our understanding of social protests? Given that religious texts, practices and ethical debates can function both to encourage individuals and/or governments in redressing social inequality and to justify a stance of ignoring it, how might we as scholars of religion better communicate the role of religion in shaping the public sphere?" We hope you will keep this theme in mind when crafting your 2021 Call for Proposals. Proposals do not need to relate to this theme but the AAR will be particularly interested in panels that address it. Scroll to the bottom of this email to contact unit members who have panel proposals in the works.

We will send another announcement when the call for proposals opens. Proposals will be due: March 1, 2021 5pm EST.

A reminder that the AAR and the Khyentse Foundation have teamed up to offer a new travel grant to support under-represented members of the Tibetan and Himalayan Studies global guild to participate in the AAR annual meeting. Papers must be accepted first before the application for this travel grant opens. Please see details below and encourage colleagues to submit papers/roundtable/panel proposals to the AAR annual meeting in San Antonio.

### Session Allotment Information

The Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit has a Tier 2 session allotment for the five-year term (2019-2023). For 2021, this means that we have two 2-hour sessions and one two-hour session for co-sponsorship. As you plan, please keep this information in mind and consider submitting your individual paper in addition to its inclusion in a fully formed panel, that is if you would like your individual paper to be included for a possible "grab-bag new research" session formed out of individual submissions.

### AAR Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Program Unit Annual Meeting Travel Grant

With funding provided by the Khyentse Foundation, the American Academy of Religion will award travel grants to support the participation of native Himalayan or Tibetan scholars at the 2021 Annual Meetings. This travel grant program encourages inclusivity for scholars from the religiously and ethnically diverse wider geographic region of Inner

Asia, Himalayas, and Tibet. The members of the AAR Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit steering committee will select the grant winners.

To be eligible to apply, applicants must be accepted to participate on a panel or session at the AAR Annual Meeting. The application for the travel grant will open AFTER notification of acceptance to the annual meeting.

#### Proposed Panels

Below are themes that have already been proposed by unit members (if you are interested in contributing to a panel on one of these topics, please contact the organizer directly):

“Contemporary monastic education in the Tibetan/Himalayan region”

Contact: Manu Lopez [manu.asia@gmail.com](mailto:manu.asia@gmail.com)

This panel co-organized with Prof. Dorji Gyeltshen (Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law; JSWSL) focuses on the changes, adaptations, and transformations of the current monastic curriculum, the challenges faced by nuns in accessing the curriculum, and the establishment of alternatives forms of religious education (such as the Bhutan Nuns Foundation Training Center, or the Institute for the Study of the Mind, both in Bhutan). Prof. Dorji Gyeltshen and I plan to focus on the transformation of religious education in Bhutan. We are looking for scholars who could present on this topic focusing on other Himalayan regions (Tibet, India, Nepal).

“Poverty, Misfortune, and Failure: Reflections on the Opacity of Karma”

Please contact Kate Hartmann ([Catherine.Hartmann@uwyo.edu](mailto:Catherine.Hartmann@uwyo.edu)) and Brandon Dotson ([dotson.brandon@gmail.com](mailto:dotson.brandon@gmail.com)) with any questions or to express interest.

The Buddhist doctrine of karma is often invoked to explain present misfortune. But individuals do not generally know their own karma, or what they might have done, whether in this life or a past life, that has led to current circumstances. In their paper “Narrative, Sub-ethics, and the Moral Life,” Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen refer to this idea as the opacity of karma. This panel takes up the Presidential Theme of “Religion, Poverty, and Inequality” by asking how Buddhists at various places and times have used ideas of karma in making sense of their difficult circumstances. How do they talk about their own karma, try to discern the causes for present situations, or reflect on how karma relates to poverty and misfortune generally? The panel asks, moreover, how these articulations of karma might reframe the way scholars think about or teach about karma. We welcome scholars specializing on Buddhism in any geographical area or time period. Depending on the level of interest, we may propose a panel in the Buddhism Unit, the Tibetan and Himalayan Religion, Chinese Religions Unit, or propose a co-sponsored panel.

“Monstrous,” Fierce, and Fantastic Beings in Himalayan Religions

Contact: Natasha Mikles ([n.mikles@txstate.edu](mailto:n.mikles@txstate.edu))

This panel invites papers on religious rituals, narratives, and texts from Himalayan traditions that relate to “monstrous” beings. For purposes of this panel, “monster” is a second-order category deployed by scholars to set up a basis on comparison for further analysis. As such, “monstrous beings” could include beings who elicit terror, possess

extraordinary qualities, or whose ontology challenges established categories; examples could include (but are not limited to): nagas, dakinis, dralha, wrathful bodhisattvas, Dharmapalas, local deities of the land, ro-lang. This panel will include as a central topic of discussion an exploration of the process of “monstrosizing” other peoples and the consequences of such discourse.

Women and Revelation in India, China, and Tibet

We would like to organize a panel that explores the central role of narrative (especially hagiography) in the process of building a community, and the key role of women (divine, human, and everything in between) play in the writing, transmission, and alteration of revelatory literature. The focus will be on the historical literature of China, India, and Tibet, and compare the shared modes of textual production in these regions. Please contact Jue Liang ([liangj@denison.edu](mailto:liangj@denison.edu)) or Jonathan Pettit ([jeep@hawaii.edu](mailto:jeep@hawaii.edu)) if you are interested in contributing or have any questions. (Possible co-sponsorship with Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit, Comparative Studies in Religion Unit, Women and Religion Unit.)

Other ideas include:

“The Religious Life of Contemporary Tibetan Women”

Contact: Jue Liang ([jl4nf@virginia.edu](mailto:jl4nf@virginia.edu))

“Evolving Perspectives on Sutra and Tantra”

Contact: Rae Dachille ([raedachille@arizona.edu](mailto:raedachille@arizona.edu))

“Dreams and Dreaming in Himalayan Religions”

Contact: Jake Dalton ([jakedalton@berkeley.edu](mailto:jakedalton@berkeley.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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Brandon Dotson, Georgetown University  
dotson.brandon@gmail.com
- Nicole Willock, Old Dominion University  
nwillock@odu.edu

## Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Unit

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### Call Text:

The Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Unit seeks papers or a panel proposal regarding 2 Themes:

1. Tillich and Religious Practices

What aspects of Tillich's thought resonate with contemporary religious practices? How is and might Tillich's thought be utilized as a resource in constructing a sense of meaning and purpose in life or sense of spirituality with respect to spiritual disciplines, inter-religious encounters, active components of socially-framed spiritual practices? We invite papers and panels engaging Tillichian themes in contemporary explorations of spiritual agency and practice.

2. Tillich and Health

Is health merely the absence of disease? Tillich engaged the idea of health with respect to such diverse topics as the health of the nation and society, mental health, illness, and depth psychology, among others. His engagements with contemporary psychologists and psychotherapists are well-known but perhaps inadequately explored. We invite papers that use Tillich's work and method to engage the topic of health broadly. We are particularly interested in papers that engage the topics of mental health and illness, psychology, and disability.

### Mission Statement:

This Unit fosters scholarship and scholarly exchanges which analyze, criticize, and interpret the thought and impact of Paul Tillich (1886–1965), engaging his thought — including revisions of and reactions against his thought — to deal with contemporary issues in theology, religion, and ethics, or the political, social, psychotherapeutic, scientific, and/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 may be published in the Society's quarterly Bulletin without prejudice to their concurrent publication.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Michele Watkins, University of San Diego  
mwatkins@sandiego.edu
- Bryan Wagoner, Davis and Elkins College  
wagonerb@dewv.edu

## Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit

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### Call Text:

For the 2021 annual conference, Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity is organizing two sessions.

- 1) One will be an open session for which papers on any topic germane to the subject area of the Program Unit may be proposed. We particularly encourage papers from graduate students, new AAR members, and minoritized scholars.
- 2) For the second session, we will be inviting scholars to present papers on “The Uses and Misuses of Eastern Late Antiquity.” How do museums, politicians, and religious thinkers use the concept of the Late Antique east? What are the aims of such uses? What do these uses highlight? What do they elide? What are the broader implications of these uses for popular knowledge, academic specialization, and the world in general?

TELA is committed to diversity and inclusivity in the study of the late antique East. Pre-arranged panels must reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate.

### 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 Mandaicism. 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.

Method of Submission: INSPIRE, 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)

### Chairs:

- Jason Mokhtarian, Indiana University, Bloomington  
jmokhtar@indiana.edu
- Sara Ronis, St. Mary's University, Texas  
sara.ronis@gmail.com

## Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit

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### Call Text:

#### Co-sponsored Session with Class, Religion, and Theology Unit

In light of the AAR theme of “Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures,” we invite proposals that discuss ways faculty have incorporated class and power analysis into religious studies courses. How do we assist students to do critical analysis of our economic and political structures and systems and how do we impassion them to envision and promote transformative social change that addresses poverty and inequality? We are especially interested in proposals that understand class as a power structure and not only as unequal income/wealth distribution, as well as proposals that foreground working-class employees and communities.

#### Co-sponsored Session with Teaching Religion Unit

We invite proposals on teaching religion using anti-racist pedagogies. Addressing race, racism, and White privilege in religious studies and theology classes is imperative in today’s world. However, discussions and assignments related to these themes can vary drastically from one institutional context to another and may prove to be fraught for students and faculty alike. This session will feature reflections about--and possible demonstrations of--innovative and transformative ways of incorporating anti-racist pedagogies into the classroom. We are especially interested in papers that showcase how alternative approaches to teaching may challenge the boundaries between scholarship and activism, as well as how faculty meet heightened demands for transformative pedagogy fostered by students' desire to reflect on their engagement in activism and protest movements.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Michael R. Fisher Jr., San Jose State University  
michael.fisher@sjsu.edu
- Laura Stivers, Dominican University of California  
laura.stivers@dominican.edu

## Vatican II Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

#### Rediscovering Synodality in a World Church

The Second Vatican Council marks the recovery of an understanding of the church as a communion of diverse local churches, including the values of collegial governance and the co-responsibility of all the baptized faithful. The tensions of maintaining diversity in communion are felt more acutely today, with the expansion of Christian populations in the global south. Pope Francis sees the practice of synodality as an indispensable path for discernment and church governance in the 21st century. The Synod for the church in Amazonia and the 2022 international synod of bishops are emblematic of his vision for the pastoral and missionary conversion of the church. We invite contributions on the significance of synodality, including Vatican II's attention to the practice of synodal governance in the early church, Catholic ecumenical learning, the processes of inculturation and indigenization, and the increasing importance of the voice of the poor for ecclesial life and mission.

#### One Human Family

Vatican II marked a turn of the Catholic Church to dialogical engagement with other Christians, non-Christians, non-believers, and to the broader world of science and culture (UR, NA, DH, GS). These themes of constructive engagement and collaboration with all people of good will in a religiously plural society are now carried forward in Pope Francis' encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, in a vision of solidarity and social friendship intended to inspire the building of a more just and sustainable world. He argues that despite the darkness of our time, another world is possible – an open world where all are created for a universal self-transcending love of others, especially the poor - wagering that such a spirituality will transcend the boundaries of Christianity and be harnessed to put an end to poverty, conflict, and violence. Contributions are invited on the reception of this vision into Catholic ecclesial life and its potential reception by other religious and secular communities.

### Mission Statement:

This Unit gives 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: first, 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, and the history of the reception of the Council, and the redaction history of the different documents of the Council; second, a strong theological one both to the hermeneutical issues connected to methods of interpreting conciliar teaching and its ongoing reception in a changing context. By looking more closely at the past, our Unit hopes to promote greater conciliarity and synodality in the Christian churches in the present. In this second mandate of its presence within the

American Academy of Religion (2018-2022) the Vatican II Studies Unit turns its attention to the reception of Vatican II within the various social and cultural contexts of the Americas and elsewhere, and to its continuing influence in the changing context of twenty-first century global Christianity.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Catherine E. Clifford, Saint Paul University  
cclifford@ustpaul.ca
- Kristin Colberg, College of Saint Benedict, Saint John's University  
kcolberg@csbsju.edu

## Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

For 2021, the Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit does not seek new proposals. They will hold two postponed panels from 2020:

-Wesleyan/Methodist Theology and Social Justice

-Women in the Wesley/Methodist Traditions

### Mission Statement:

This Unit seeks to promote the critical understanding and appropriation of Wesleyan and Methodist 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Edgardo Colon-Emeric, Duke University  
ecolonemic@div.duke.edu
- Cindy K. Wesley, University of Northern Colorado  
cindy.wesley@unco.edu

## Western Esotericism Unit

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### Call Text:

The accepted panels of 2020 were postponed to 2021 due to the pandemic. No new call for proposals can be issued this year.

### 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>).

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Egil Aspren, Stockholm University  
egil.aspre@rel.su.se
- Christa Shusko, York College of Pennsylvania  
cshusko@ycp.edu

## Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit

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Call Text:

Legacy, Leverage, and Political Leadership: Black Women's Activism and Building Collective Futures

Black women religious, civic, and political leaders have led extraordinary lives and had an incredible impact on the lives of black people, indigenous, and numerous people globally. From the earliest leadership of postbellum activism of Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman to the twentieth-century activism of Dorothy Height, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Daisy Bates, Hon. Barbara Jordan and Angela Davis black women have galvanized hundreds of persons to fight for justice. Twentieth-century political leaders, Senator Carol Moseley Braun (D-IL), Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (D-NY), and current leaders including Vice President Kamala Harris, Congressional Representatives Maxine Waters, and Barbara Lee, Attorney Stacey Abrams, and Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms are courageous, charismatic trailblazers who have changed the political trajectory of these United States. Organizers like philanthropist Latosha Brown and Minister of Justice Traci Blackmon have stood their ground, protested, and collaborated with groups reflected in #BLM, The Five, Fair Vote/Fight, and Georgia Blue. Of note, HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities] played a major role in both their education and conscience-raising. This session invites papers on the following: the impact and leverage of black woman's civic leadership using social media and community organizing; black women's engagement of public policy and political leadership with voting as a social justice issue; the legacy of black women's leadership in education, religion, and public health (COVID-19).

Women Still Run This Thing! Hip Hop, Womanism, and Collective Meaning-Making

Far too often the hypermasculine male is the trope that commercial Hip Hop puts out as "Hip Hop." As scholars in the field of Hip Hop Studies and Womanist Thought, we know this is not true. Women play an influential role in Hip Hop Culture; principally as it pertains to the social constructs of sexual orientation, gender constructs, race, and social issues. This year, we invite papers for a co-sponsorship between the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society and Critical Approaches Religion and Hip Hop. Topics can include, but certainly not limited to:

- Hip Hop womanism
- Hood womanism
- Verzus and Cancel Culture
- Meg Thee Stallion and #ProtectBlackWomen
- Hip Hop of the South
- WAP and politics of sexuality (Cardi B, Meg Thee Stallion)
- Women in Hip Hop & their historical contributions (Missy Elliott, Nikki Minaj, No Name, Rhapsody, etc.)
- Women & their role in activism & politics within the hip hop culture

- The construct of “male sponsorship” for entry into rap music
- Does rap music hate women?
- The gendered & social discourse of “Bitch”
- Hip Hop & #MeToo
- Women in Hip Hop & Digital Technocultures

Open Call. We welcome any and all proposals that are not specifically mentioned in the call for papers and we are specifically interested in topics and theoretical insights from outside North America.

Mission Statement:

This Unit provides a forum for religious scholarship that engages theoretically and methodologically the four-part definition of a Womanist as defined 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.

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Melanie Jones, Union Presbyterian Seminary  
melaniechantejones@gmail.com
- Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Seminary of the Southwest  
drcherylkd@gmail.com

## Women and Religion Unit

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Call Text:

While all submissions are welcomed, we are particularly interested in proposals that respond to the following topics.

- **Cross-racial Solidarity for Antiracist Work:** Covid-19 is a moment of reckoning with the interconnectivity of all forms of racism with the resurgence of centuries-long anti-Asian racism and militarized anti-Black racism. We invite papers that analyze the interconnection of various forms of racism in the U.S. through the lens of gender and sexuality and engage cross-racial solidarity for antiracist work among women of color. What role does religion play in racism and/or antiracist work? Those who engage in interfaith approaches and non-Christian religious traditions are encouraged to submit their proposals.

- **The precarity of Life:** We solicit proposals that analyze precarious life in times of various global crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, war, and neoliberal global market. How does religion exasperate “precariousness” and/or help people navigate life’s precarity, uncertainty, and ambiguity?

(1) We seek proposals that critically interrogate the relationship between religion and the increase of *gender-based violence* during the Covid-19 pandemic.

(2) The gendered aspect of labor (e.g., contingent labor in the academy) and precarity: How can religion be used as a tool in analyzing the gendered aspect of contingent labor and care work?

(3) Poverty and precarious life: we welcome proposals that offer new theories, discourses, and perspectives on intersectional approaches to poverty and religion.

(4) Precarity and violence in the context of care work: What kind of violence (e.g., moral injury, psychological abuse, and exclusion from healthcare) would diverse bodies of people experience in healthcare and care work? How is virtue talked about in the precarious life?

- **Technology and Virtual Community Building: Progressive Leadership and Religious Movements:** We welcome proposals that critically study technology's role in building a virtual feminist community domestically and transnationally. How does technology contribute to expanding progressive leadership and religious movement and creating a virtual community? How would this community look through the lens of gender and sexuality? What kind of feminist leadership can be imagined in order to sustain the momentum of progressive religious movements in response to race, gender, sexuality, and class-based social inequalities?

- **Women’s Studies in Religion:** We seek proposals that introduce, assess, and critically reflect on women’s studies in religion, including topics, feminist research methods, diverse religious traditions, ethical implications, political theology, and transborder solidarity.

- Co-sponsored sessions

(1) A possible co-sponsored session with the Religion and Disability Studies Unit: Disability intersected with gender, sexuality, class, and race is an important tool in analyzing social inequalities. We seek presentations exploring theories, experiences, and/or activism at the intersections of disability, gender, sexuality, and race to bear on analysis of poverty and growing inequalities. For example, what kind of disability perspectives are vital for religion scholars to interrogate political economic inequalities? How would intersectional approaches to social inequalities envision a new social order with an emphasis on gender and disability justice?

(2) A possible co-sponsored session with the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit: Pre-arranged book panel on Laura Levitt, *The Objects that Remain* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020)

Weaving together an examination of the evidence in police storage of her unsolved rape and an appraisal of artifacts in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Laura Levitt investigates how material objects can be traces of violence and interrogates how we think about evidence as well as its potential for understanding traumatic events and pursuing justice. Panelists will critically assess the book and identify its most significant contributions to research on the intersections of material objects, trauma, and justice research. The author will respond to each panelist's analysis as well as answer questions from session attendees. (\*This is a pre-arranged session. Should you have any questions regarding the session, please contact co-chairs of the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit or the Women and Religion Unit.)

(3) Women and Revelation in India, China, and Tibet

We would like to organize a panel that explores the central role of narrative (especially hagiography) in the process of building a community, and the key role of women (divine, human, and everything in between) play in the writing, transmission, and alteration of revelatory literature. The focus will be on the historical literature of China, India, and Tibet, and compare the shared modes of textual production in these regions. Please contact Jue Liang ([liangj@denison.edu](mailto:liangj@denison.edu)) or Jonathan Pettit ([jeep@hawaii.edu](mailto:jeep@hawaii.edu)) if you are interested in contributing or have any questions. (Possible co-sponsorship with Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit, Comparative Studies in Religion Unit, Himalayan and Tibetan Religions Unit.)

#### Mission Statement:

The Women and Religion Unit seeks to promote inclusivity and excellence in scholarship. We have been intentional about including participants/presenters from interdisciplinary approaches and encouraging non-traditional ways of sharing scholarly work on women's

religion. In making selections for the annual sessions, we work collaboratively with other sections, groups, and consultations of AAR 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 and religion can be advanced.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Boyung Lee, Iliff School of Theology  
blee@iliff.edu
- K. Christine Pae, Denison University  
paec@denison.edu

## Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit

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### Call Text:

Inspired by this year's Presidential Theme, "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures," we invite submissions around the following themes:

- Labor and Women of Color (WOC) in the academy and beyond: In what ways are women of color expected to do certain kinds of labor in the academy that are not rewarded—either with merit or money?
- The disproportionate number of WOC who are contingent faculty—what paths/alternatives to viable employment and thriving are WOC choosing in the academy or other fields?
- How might WOC distinctly and creatively contribute to different models of labor and intellectual exchange beyond the current models of our guild and higher education in general?
- Collective responsibility: how might women of color in the academy take greater responsibility for offering and facilitating alternative models of flourishing outside of the models and priorities of capitalism that dominate higher education?

Additionally, we invite submissions around the following themes:

- Love, rage and embodiment: historically, both religious traditions and prescribed roles for women suggest that the expression of rage is antithetical both to notions of womanhood and spiritual maturity. In the present moment, this false binary has been replaced by a celebration of expressions of love and rage. In what ways are women of color finding energy, agency and generative strategies for individual and communal transformation by mining spiritual traditions toward an embodiment of love and rage.
- Celebrating women who broke barriers—mentors, models, firsts, trailblazers—especially women who have not been celebrated, honored, etc. for their work. (again, themes of what qualifies as 'work' toward tenure and promotion). Who is doing the interdisciplinary work of unearthing and celebrating the intellectual and communal work of these 'hidden sheroes?'

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Sailaja Krishnamurti, Saint Mary's University  
sailaja.krishnamurti@smu.ca
- Deborah Rogers, Lane College  
drogers@crcds.edu

## World Christianity Unit

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Call Text:

The World Christianity Unit invites proposals concerning:

World Christianity and the Environment, including issues of displacement, especially pertaining to poverty, wealth, and inequality.

World Christianity and Transnational Digital Networks, exploring the connection between social media and Christian community life, as well as online research methods for the study of Christianity worldwide.

World Christianity and Political Activism, with a focus on antiracist activism, decentering whiteness, and Christian Nationalism.

World Christianity and Violence, with attention to all forms of violence, in historical and contemporary perspectives.

Global Evangelicalism and Religious Conservatism, with attention to political theologies and case studies that demonstrate both trends and diversities within the Evangelical movement.

Proposals combining any of the topics above with matters relating to gender, race, or the COVID-19 pandemic will receive special consideration.

The Teaching Religion Unit and the World Christianity Unit invite proposals for a possible co-sponsored session on teaching World Christianity. We are especially interested in papers that discuss (and possibly demonstrate) effective assignments, activities, or pedagogical approaches to teaching Christianity as a world religion as it is practiced in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific, as well as in diasporic communities in the West. Papers might address topics such as pedagogical approaches to decolonizing World Christianity, teaching in/about the diaspora, or other themes.

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.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

As a rule, proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection. Exceptions include special sessions, e.g. author-meets-critics sessions and some co-sponsored panels.

Chairs:

- Corey Williams, Leiden University  
c.l.williams@hum.leidenuniv.nl
- Briana Wong, Wake Forest University  
Wongbl@wfu.edu

## Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit

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### Call Text:

For the 2021 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, we especially invite proposals on the following topics. Please contact the organizing scholar listed next to each topic for more information:

– "Pedagogy for Yoga Studies: Three New Works on the Theory and Practice of Yoga,"  
Naomi Worth, [nw3ca@virginia.edu](mailto:nw3ca@virginia.edu)

We are also open to full-panel proposals on any other topic falling under the purview of Yoga Studies.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Sravana Borkatky-Varma, University of North Carolina, Wilmington  
[borkatkyvarmas@uncw.edu](mailto:borkatkyvarmas@uncw.edu)
- Anya Foxen, California Polytechnic State University  
[afoxen@calpoly.edu](mailto:afoxen@calpoly.edu)

## Yogācāra Studies Unit

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### Call Text:

Call for Papers: We have outlined a set of panel topics that we are particularly interested in soliciting proposals for. If you would like to participate in a panel on one of these topics, please contact the person listed. Anyone is also welcome to propose a panel or a paper on a topic not listed here. The AAR has not yet released a deadline date for proposals, but it is usually at the beginning of March, so if you are interested in participating in a panel on any of these topics, please contact the point-person soon.

- 1) Text panel: this is our flagship event at which participants arrive with a text that is distributed ahead of time, a few people speak briefly on key aspects of a selected passage, and then the panelists and audience engage in discussion on that passage. This year we hope for our panels to focus on critiques of Yogācāra (by Madhyamikas and others) and Yogācāra critiques of others. We hope to read a relevant passage of a text that exemplifies some such critique. Contact Joy Brennan ([brennanj@kenyon.edu](mailto:brennanj@kenyon.edu))
- 2) Yogācāra Criticisms of Mādhyamikas. Contact Dan McNamara ([dan.raa@gmail.com](mailto:dan.raa@gmail.com))
- 3) Buddhist or non-Buddhist Criticisms of Yogācāra. Contact Doug Duckworth ([douglas.duckworth@gmail.com](mailto:douglas.duckworth@gmail.com))
- 4) Book roundtable on Eyal Aviv's "Differentiating the Pearl from the Fish-Eye: Ouyang Jingwu and the Revival of Scholastic Buddhism". Contact Jingjing Li ([cindyljj2012@gmail.com](mailto:cindyljj2012@gmail.com))
- 5) Yogācāra contributions to theories of mind and the work of the imagination. Contact Karin Meyers ([karin.l.meyers@gmail.com](mailto:karin.l.meyers@gmail.com))
- 6) Contemplative Practices in Yogacara. Contact Eyal Aviv ([aviv@gwu.edu](mailto:aviv@gwu.edu))
- 7) Yogācāra, Emptiness, and Tathāgatagarbha. Contact Sumi Lee ([sumiring@gmail.com](mailto:sumiring@gmail.com))

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

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

### Chairs:

- Joy Brennan, Kenyon College

brennanj@kenyon.edu

- Douglas S. Duckworth, Temple University  
douglas.duckworth@temple.edu

## Artificial Intelligence and Religion Seminar

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### Call Text:

Scholars of religion and theology add a crucial voice to the ethics of artificial intelligence. We seek papers that address ethical questions associated with artificial intelligence and religion. What should be the ethical limits and concerns of an artificial intelligence both now and in the future? What can religion offer to the construction of an artificial intelligence ethics? What contribution can Religious Studies make to the issue of A.I. Safety? What pitfalls might religion expose? How can A.I. be an ally or enemy in the realms of healthcare, eco-justice, social justice, or authoritarianism? Likewise, given that A.I. might impact specific populations differently, what might religious studies have to say about the ethics of AI from a racialized, gendered, sexed, and/or a differently-abled perspective? We welcome original papers that pose new questions.

Additionally, we seek proposals that show experiments using artificial intelligence in the study of religion. Scholars that are finding new applications for A.I. are encouraged to submit an abstract proposal even if their project is on-going. Follow-up reports on projects already presented are likewise welcome.

Please note that this paper uses the AAR full-papers program, in which papers are made available before the meeting. Accepted proposers should expect to produce article length papers (4000-7000 words) that will be due by mid-October 2021.

### Mission Statement:

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is a topic with widespread cultural impact. It is likewise becoming increasingly relevant to religion. Several attempts at using A.I. to understand biblical texts or to model religious practices have yielded fascinating results. But A. I. increasingly is becoming part of the lives of religious people from home A.I. devices, to the application of A.I. by religious groups and organizations, to the prospect of a future superintelligent A.I. that may pose existential threats to humanity or provide solutions to seemingly insoluble problems. Artificial Intelligence is a topic that will increasingly impact religion and religious people as well as individuals who find spirituality in places that are intersecting with digitalization, including popular culture sites such as sport, and music. Changes may be coming from widespread unemployment to the virtual elimination of death itself. These are issues within the purview of Religious Studies and Theology that require systematic analysis.

This the seminar deals with the application and analysis of Narrow A.I. as well as the potential of General A.I. We seek scholars interested in experimental applications of artificial intelligence to religious studies and theology as well as the analysis of current and future implications of A.I. for religion and spirituality. This unit is a resource for engaging the importance and relevance of A.I. as it intersects with religion, theology, and spirituality. We seek to contribute to the larger cultural and multidisciplinary discussion about these issues as A.I develops.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Randall Reed, Appalachian State University  
reedrw@appstate.edu
- Tracy J. Trothen, Queen's University, Kingston  
trothent@queensu.ca

## Buddhist Pedagogy Seminar

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### Call Text:

Our seminar welcomes papers on any aspect of pedagogy for teaching Buddhism. Based on 2020's positive experience, we plan to have two 90-minute sessions for roundtable discussions in 2021. The roundtable discussion aims to offer a platform that scholars can use to exchange critical reflections on teaching Buddhism in higher education. Each presenter will have approximately ten minutes to present a specific assignment, assessment method, class activity, or other strategies that help students understand Buddhism. Please send your proposal in 500 words through AAR's INSPIRE System. We invite scholars who are currently teaching Buddhism or related subjects to examine these topics, but they are not limited to them:

- technology that works and does not work for online teaching during the Covid era
- the essential/threshold information in your Buddhist studies classroom
- teaching Buddhism and race in the classroom
- specific readings or textbooks integrated into the syllabus
- studying abroad for Buddhist studies
- teaching students who have lived or are living in a place where Buddhism is the indigenous religion
- teaching students who are Buddhist
- experiential and embodied learning in the Buddhist studies classroom
- strategies of teaching contemplation/mindfulness practice to allay the possibility of proselytization
- Buddhism and film

For any inquires related to proposal submission, please contact Gloria Chien at [chien@gonzaga.edu](mailto:chien@gonzaga.edu).

### Mission Statement:

The mission of the Buddhist Pedagogy Seminar is to promote critical reflection on how our teaching and presentation of Buddhism enhances understanding of Buddhist traditions, practices, and values. Our seminar will facilitate discussion and support research about pedagogically effective approaches to teaching Buddhism. We will focus on a variety of pedagogical challenges within the field over the course of five years, including but not limited to, the religious or secularized use of Buddhist meditation practices in everyday life, modern public understanding of Buddhism shaped through current events, hotly debated ethical issues, and scholarship about teaching Buddhism. This seminar invites discussion about teaching Buddhism in today's classroom, how Buddhism has been taught historically, how different media about Buddhism can supplement classroom instruction, and how insights from Buddhist traditions can enrich pedagogy in other fields. Although we envision the seminar appealing primarily to those in Buddhist Studies, we believe it will be beneficial for instructors and scholars outside of the field who teach about Buddhism in their courses.

We are committed to supporting important work in the nascent field of Buddhist pedagogy. Our goal is to grow this field and provide it with a robust arena in which scholars engage in dynamic conversations.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Gloria I-Ling Chien, Gonzaga University  
chien@gonzaga.edu
- Trung Huynh, University of Houston  
hthich@ius.edu

## Constructive Muslim Thought and Engaged Scholarship Seminar

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### Call Text:

The Constructive Muslim Thought and Engaged Scholarship Seminar is soliciting proposals for the 2020 AAR Annual Meeting that address the methodologies, parameters, and trajectories in contemporary efforts in producing constructive and engaged Muslim scholarship. The theme for the inaugural year of the seminar is to provide a critical assessment of current “state of field.” Proposed papers, then, ought to be framed accordingly around this theme. Papers examining critical forms of constructive Muslim thought and engage scholarship from the disciplinary perspectives of theology, ethics, philosophy, hermeneutics are welcome as are other approaches and areas of inquiry. In particular, we are interested in papers that:

- critically examine the history of constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship in the contemporary period, both within and outside the Euro-American Academy;
- survey and assess the systematic, structural, and institutional challenges facing constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship;
- engage, critique, and/or delineate the perceived boundaries and parameters of constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship as a discipline;
- propose, develop, and/or analyze new methodological approaches to constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship;

Given the format of the seminar, only individually submitted paper proposals are appropriate for consideration. Please do not submit pre-arranged panels.

If your proposal is accepted and you agree to be a part of the seminar, you are expected to attend and participate in the seminar at the Annual Meeting, barring unforeseeable exceptional circumstances. Upon acceptance, seminar participants will be placed in contact with one author to develop a public-facing bibliography of constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship (to be published online) that draws upon their individual areas of research. Moreover, participants are expected to complete and submit their papers at least two months in advance so that their papers can be pre-circulated among interested seminar attendees. Please note that papers will not be delivered at the seminar. Instead, seminar presenters and attendees will be assumed to have read the papers in advance and should arrive ready to discuss the substance of each paper and the thematic connections and tensions that emerge between them.

### Mission Statement:

This seminar is aimed at exploring the developing academic discourse of constructive Muslim thought as a disciplinary field. Constructive Muslim thought is a broad and rich field of critical inquiry that involves both knowledge production and praxis. The constructive Muslim discourse is the cumulative result of the pioneering work of Muslim feminist scholars, postcolonial thinkers, decolonial thinkers, ethicists, scholars of Islam and critical race theory, among many others. Structural critique, ethical discernment, and

community engagement are integral aspects of this broad body of scholarship. The organizers of this seminar argue that this expansive array of work can be construed as constituting an emergent new field within the academy, namely “constructive Muslim thought,” which runs parallels with, but is distinct from the study of Islam and Muslims. The seminar is envisioned as a space for scholars of the study of Islam and Muslims and academic practitioners of engaged scholarship from out of the Islamic tradition (broadly conceived) to share and develop their research in conversation with one another. Specifically, over the course of five years, the seminar will critically examine two key topics at length: 1) the methodological directions and epistemological interventions that are emerging within the constructive Muslim discourse, and 2) the systemic and institutional challenges that the constructive Muslim discourse faces within academe broadly and between the disciplinary categories of theology and religious studies, more specifically. By providing a scholarly space to meet, the seminar aims to support the discourse conceptually and to grow the discipline structurally.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Martin Nguyen, Fairfield University  
alakhira@gmail.com
- Najeeba Syeed-Miller, Chicago Theological Seminary  
najeebasyeed@gmail.com

## Contextualizing the Catholic Sexual Abuse Crisis Seminar

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### Call Text:

For 2021, the Contextualizing the Catholic Sexual Abuse Crisis Seminar will hold two 90-minute panels from a postponed 2.5-hour panel from 2020, and will not be accepting proposals this year.

### Mission Statement:

*Contextualizing the Catholic Sexual Abuse Crisis* is a five-year seminar (2019 - 2023) working towards greater understanding about clergy sexual abuse and the range of questions that it raises.

Attention to clergy abuse must become normative for any treatment of modern Catholicism to not itself be complicit in the abuse and its concealment.

Please note the following guidelines on our values and norms:

- Seminar presenters are required to submit their full papers by the end of September, to be pre-circulated to all attendees via the AAR Papers system. This allows for more conversation and deeper reflection at the conference.
- Proposals should be made with an eye towards publishable work.
- The seminar seeks collaborative and multidisciplinary research, including through historical, ethnographic, theological, legal, political, psychological, and ethical frameworks.
- We are especially interested in proposals that press consideration into new anti-racist, anti-colonial, feminist, or queer directions.
- We encourage methodologies that uplift the voices of survivors, especially victims from African American, indigenous, and non-Anglo parishes.
- Over the full five years of sessions, the seminar will also examine sexual abuse in contexts beyond the Catholic church, both in other religious communities and secular institutions.
- We are committed to supporting research from scholars at all career stages, including doctoral candidates and independent scholars.
- The seminar encourages all of its members to participate in and propose papers to related program units, including Roman Catholic Studies, Religion and Sexuality, Childhood Studies, Ecclesiological Investigations, Religion and Violence, North American Religions, Religion in Europe, and Ethics.

### Method of Submission:

## INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Brian Clites, Case Western Reserve University  
brian.clites@case.edu
- Megan McCabe, Gonzaga University  
mccabem@gonzaga.edu

## Hagiology Seminar

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### Call Text:

We invite papers for the inaugural year of our seminar on Hagiology that examine the question of the current state of the field of “hagiographical” studies. Whereas we are interested in challenging the over-determining nature of this Western, Christian signifier, we are intrigued by what direction this area on inquiry is taking and how best to nurture this into its most useful and advantageous form? Our aim as a seminar is to move hagiographical studies in a more comparative and collaborative direction, and we welcome papers that inquire along those lines from their own fields of interest and with materials that they deem “hagiographical” material.

Presenters may begin with the question of: How is the study of hagiology in your own tradition or field emerging, and what tools, categories, taxonomies, and methods are most useful to its studies? In addition, papers should consider how these local details can be interpreted and put in conversation with other fields and traditions. We hope this panel will facilitate a broader conversation about where hagiographical studies is currently situated and signal where it should go.

The session will be exploratory and collaborative in nature, as it seeks to practice a style of conference preparation and presentation that utilizes comparative practices and innovates along those lines.

Presenters will share their papers with fellow panelists prior to the conference date and participate in a few rounds of collaboration with comparative methods. We hope to help presenters be active in creating the best version of their panel by facilitating cross-cultural and interdisciplinary work, while assessing its value as we proceed. We hope the meta discussion of methodology will comprise a portion of the session.

### Mission Statement:

This seminar is dedicated to exploring the “hagiographical” as a category that transcends the particular contextual boundaries of religious traditions, while functioning as a focused and sustained site of collaboration, pedagogical exploration, and theoretical foundation for better refining the Study of Religion.

It takes up the question of “hagiography,” and, using a comparative method, interrogates its broad analytical utility. By inviting a wide-range of traditions and types of scholarship (textual, materially-oriented, ritually-conceived, oral, historical, and contemporary) into a diverse scholarly conversation and collaborative community, we seek to challenge the normative, Christian rendering of the term.

We place the growing need for cross-fertilization at the center of our methodological approach, building it into our theme and function. Hagiology is an inquiry that has been marked by a range of interpretive strategies and vectors of influence, from early practitioners and emulators, to authors and compilers, to commentators and historians,

to societies and contemporary practitioners, to re-imagined historical prominence. It has finally emerged as a dynamic area for comparative studies.

Ultimately, this seminar will foster dialogue among scholars from a range of institutions and intellectual traditions. Its aim is to use the collaborative and comparative methods to resituate hagiology within the current religious studies context, and to explore how this field can best support, articulate, and inform the broader field regarding the importance of doing Hagiology in a productive manner that is commensurate with the prevalence of its material forms.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Todd French, Rollins College  
tfrench@rollins.edu
- R. Brian Siebeking, Gonzaga University  
siebeking@gonzaga.edu

## Intersectional Hindu Studies: Feminist and Critical Race Approaches to Research and Teaching Seminar

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### Call Text:

There will not be an open call for papers this year; rather, we will be asking invited participants to produce presentations related to our exploration of the topics:

- 1). Exploring Caste Supremacy and the meaning and practices involved in Anti-Caste Activism and Scholarship.
- 2). White Supremacy and how it's influenced the study of Hinduism
- 3). Hindutva's impact on the scholarship and scholars of Hindu studies.

### Mission Statement:

This seminar centers the work of racialized researchers and teachers of Hinduism who use critical race theory (CRT) and intersectional feminist theory in our own work, and who are committed to challenging systemic inequality in academic spaces. We have three objectives:

1. To develop an intersectional critique of the formation and institutionalization of Hindu Studies as a field
2. To challenge the prevailing narratives about Hindus and Hindu Studies in the academy and in the global public sphere
3. To create a space for racialized scholars in Hindu Studies (and connected fields) to examine and share our own experiences in academia

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Shreena Gandhi, Michigan State University  
shreenaniketa@gmail.com
- Tanisha Ramachandran, Wake Forest University  
ramacht@wfu.edu

## Mahābhārata and Classical Hinduism Seminar

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### Call Text:

The Seminar's initial call for papers is intended to explore the state of the field of Mahābhārata studies. We will solicit papers addressing the various approaches employed in previously published works to any part of the Mahābhārata tradition, e.g., Sanskrit or vernacular texts, dramas, and ritual enactments. Papers proposing new avenues of approach or areas in which new research is needed are also welcome. Analysis of the extensive contributions of Alf Hiltebeitel to the understanding of the Sanskrit text and its performative traditions would also be welcome.

### Mission Statement:

The Mahābhārata and Classical Hinduism Seminar seeks to facilitate the academic exchange so necessary to progress through a format similar to a workshop, with pre-circulated papers. This seminar will bring together philologists, Indologists, ethnographers, scholars of performance theory and practices, and generalists taking on the daunting task of incorporating India's great epic into their coursework on Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, or Yoga. Over the course of the five-year seminar, we hope that these varied approaches will prove mutually illuminating and raise new questions. The seminar's scope includes not only the Sanskrit text, but also dramatic and fictional retellings, regional and vernacular versions, etc. We will select papers by asking the following four questions, which will change somewhat according to each year's topic: Does the paper shine a new light on some previously underappreciated aspect, episode, character, or form of the epic? Does the paper either represent or respond to the most current trends and arguments in Mahābhārata studies? Does the paper help to demystify the Mahābhārata, helping non-specialists who are intimidated by its length and complexity to incorporate it into their teaching or scholarship? Does the paper provide a model for interdisciplinary practice (e.g., Does it bridge the gap between philology and new forms of critical textual analysis or between ethnography and history of religions?).

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Arti Dhand, University of Toronto  
arti.dhand@utoronto.ca
- Bruce M. Sullivan, Northern Arizona University  
bruce.sullivan@nau.edu

## Navarātri Seminar

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### Call Text:

For this year's Navarātri Seminar panel, we are accepting papers on any aspect of Navarātri; however, the following themes were suggested by colleagues in attendance:

Navaratri and COVID-19  
Spring Navaratri/Other Navaratri  
Domestic Navaratri  
Navaratri in Diaspora

### Mission Statement:

This Seminar 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Ute Huesken, Heidelberg University  
huesken@uni-heidelberg.de
- Caleb Simmons, University of Arizona  
cbs852s@gmail.com

## New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous Seminar

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### Call Text:

Since our 2020 session was postponed, we are not accepting new proposals for 2021. The session arranged for 2020 will be held in 2021.

New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous is a five-year seminar dedicated to developing a better theoretical foundation for the study of monsters and the monstrous in the field of religious studies. The second year of our seminar will question the role of monsters in authoritative systems (including but not limited to those systems traditionally approached as religions):

What role do monsters serve in explaining misfortune?

Are monsters a source of injustice or do they create justice as agents of punishment?

How do monsters represent a challenge to or complication of an established order?

While these questions have sometimes been framed around discussions of “theodicy,” we explicitly want to push against this Western-oriented term. For example, how do monsters represent, cause, or explain challenges to authoritative conceptions?

Can we think about monsters, misfortunate, and (in)justice in new ways that develop greater theological nuance outside of the Euro-American religious imagination?

Alternatively, how does the presence of monstrosity in a “non-religious”/“secular” authoritative system suggest content or thought that could be evaluated as religious?

### Mission Statement:

The Mission of the New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous Five-Year Seminar is to facilitate dialogue between different areas and methodologies within religious studies to arrive at a better theory of the intersection of religion, monsters, and the monstrous. Due to the diverse nature of our topic, we encourage proposals from any tradition or theoretical perspective. Each year of the seminar will focus on a different theoretical problem as follows:

Year One -- Taxonomy. The first task of the seminar will be to explore the taxonomy of “monsters” as a second-order category. What defines a “monster” and what are we talking about when we talk about monsters?

Year Two -- Theodicy: What role do monsters serve in explaining misfortune? Are monsters a source of injustice or do they create justice as agents of punishment?

Year Three -- Cosmology: How do monsters function to map out reality, including time and space?

Year Four -- Monstrification and humanization: When, how, and why are other people and their gods "monstrified?" How does racism intersect with the discourse of the monstrous? Conversely, when, how, and why are monsters humanized?

Year Five -- Phenomenology: How should we interpret narratives of encounters with fantastic beings? To what extent are reductionist readings of these narratives appropriate and helpful? Are there viable approaches beyond reductionism?

At the conclusion of the seminar, our findings will be published as an edited volume or otherwise disseminated to the scholarly community.

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Natasha Mikles, Texas State University  
n.mikles@txstate.edu
- Kelly Murphy, Central Michigan University  
kelly.murphy@cmich.edu

## Origen and Origen Reception Seminar

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### Call Text:

The Origen and Origen Reception Seminar is not accepting proposals for 2021 because last year's sessions were postponed.

### Mission Statement:

The mission of the Origen and Origen Reception seminar is to foster focused discussion about central themes in Origen's thinking and about the reception thereof. The seminar will include all aspects of Origen's thinking such as theology, philosophy, history, exegesis, and philology. The seminar is particularly interested in the reception of Origen of Alexandria's thinking in various times and places. Each session of the seminar will thus focus on a specific aspect of his thought and its reception in later traditions.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Aarhus University  
alj@cas.au.dk
- Peter Martens, Saint Louis University  
peter.martens@slu.edu

## Religion, Attire, and Adornment in North America Seminar

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### Call Text:

For 2021, the Religion, Attire, and Adornment Seminar will hold two panels deferred from 2020. Presenters for both sessions are already scheduled.

Session 1: "Dialogue with the Author" session on Lynn Neal's *Religion in Vogue: Christianity and Fashion in America* (NYU, 2019).

Session 2: Method and Theory for the study of Religion, Attire, and Adornment.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Marie W. Dallam, University of Oklahoma  
mwdallam@ou.edu
- Martha L Finch, Missouri State University  
marthafinch@missouristate.edu

## Religions and 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 papers examining these topics across broad range of family configurations, religious traditions, and historical eras. We are particularly interested in papers that move beyond issues of motherhood to examine other familial relationships such as extended kinship networks, siblings, elder care, singleness in a religious world designed for families, divorce, queer families, and men in familial contexts. We also seeking papers that examine traditions apart from white Christianities, particularly religions of the African diaspora, African American Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Asian American Christian Communities, New Religious Movements, and others. Geographically, we are particularly interested in work from North America outside of the continental US. We are open to all historical periods.

### 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Samira Mehta, University of Colorado Boulder  
smehta@post.harvard.edu
- Susan Ridgely, University of Wisconsin  
susan.ridgely@wisc.edu

## Religions, Borders, and Immigration Seminar

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### Call Text:

For AAR 2021, we invite proposals with focus on interreligious explorations and comparative theological reflections on the contemporary challenges and historical examples of forced and voluntary migration as shaped by racial discrimination and LGBTQ identity dynamic. We invite proposals that connect these less explored aspects of migration with emerging constructive visions about how these realities “begin to reshape the interpretations of the Ultimate reality, as it is envisioned in various religious traditions in dialogue with diverse traditions of ethics and pastoral responses to the refugee crisis” (from Statement of Purpose). This seminar already has had excellent coverage on the intersection of migration and religion related to the U.S.-Mexico border in the Christian context. For 2021 we seek proposals to expand the conversation to include contexts beyond North America with robust and explicit engagement with the following topics through interreligious/comparative lenses of interpretation:

1. Constructs of racial identity and prejudice at the intersection with religious identity in contemporary and historical hot spots of migration (geographical and cultural);
2. The role of LGBTQ+ identity at the intersection of religious identity and migration globally but also at the U.S.-Mexico border as LGBTQ+ persons from diverse nations and diverse religious backgrounds seek protection in USA;
3. The above areas of interest (race and gender identities in the global contexts of migration) with a specific focus on non-Christian perspectives and experiences.

### Mission Statement:

The overall purpose of this seminar is to promote interreligious and interdisciplinary collaboration on global migration from theological perspectives and how it begins to reshape the interpretations of the Ultimate reality, as it is envisioned in various religious traditions in dialogue with diverse traditions of ethics and pastoral responses to the refugee crisis. This seminar’s focus or theme is on the intersection of borders, migration, religious practices and how all of those are being reenvisioned and reinterpreted through dialogical theological reflection in interfaith perspectives. The work of the seminar addresses one of most critical issues of our time, and we believe that religion plays an essential role in understanding the meaning of these changes. This new seminar will continue to encourage different and creative approaches, such as comparative theology and theologies of religious diversity, to explore the meaning of our times.

### Method of Submission: INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Loye Ashton, Aoyama Gakuin University  
loyeashton@gmail.com
- Kristine Suna-Koro, Xavier University  
sunakorok@xavier.edu

## Religious Reflections on Friendship Seminar

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### Call Text:

The Religious Reflections on Friendship Seminar invites proposals for papers and panel presentations that address the intersection of religion and friendship from any scholarly perspective and religious tradition. We welcome papers that broaden contemporary perspectives on friendship and challenge dominant perspectives on friendship, as they bring friendship and religion into dialogue with contemporary issues, needs, and challenges. The following themes, amongst others, may be engaged from the perspective of one or more religious traditions:

- Friendship within religious texts and/or historic time periods
- Theological and/or mystical perspectives on friendship
- Friendship and religious/theological ethics
- Friendship and interreligious/interfaith studies
- Indigenous perspectives on relationality and friendship
- Civic friendship and the common good
- Friendship practices amid current crises (climate, health, economic, political)
- Friendship and BLM (race-relations dialogue, liberation, solidarity)
- Friendship-informed pedagogies for the teaching of religion

Echoing 2021's presidential theme "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures" we most specifically invite papers that interrogate ways in which religious reflections on friendship may contribute to transformative thought and practices in charting anew our collective futures.

### Mission Statement:

The purpose of this Seminar is to provide a broad forum in which the important but under-studied relationship of friendship can be studied, discussed, challenged, and ultimately enriched – from a variety of religious perspectives. Friendship is a relationship that is essential for flourishing. In times ripe with division and conflict, we assert that the study of friendship contributes towards furthering religious understanding and dialogue. Friendship as a religious topic, broadly and creatively defined, touches on matters of faith, ecclesiology, anthropology, history, politics, philosophy, ethics, race, gender, sex, class, and economics among others.

We welcome papers that explore friendship from different disciplines and theological/religious perspectives, and are open to a variety of methodological approaches. Papers from the Seminar are eligible to be considered for inclusion in two published volumes, the first focused on multireligious reflections and the second based on interreligious reflections. The volumes are expected to be published in the Religion and Borders Series (Fortress/Lexington Books).

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Anne-Marie Ellithorpe, Vancouver School of Theology  
aellithorpe@vst.edu
- Hussam S. Timani, Christopher Newport University  
hussam.timani@cnu.edu

## Teaching Against Islamophobia Seminar

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Call Text:

Teaching Against Islamophobia is a new five-year seminar dedicated to cultivating a wider awareness of both the challenges and opportunities faced by engaged scholars combating Islamophobia. Toward that end, we will facilitate conversations at the annual meeting that

- (1) explore the differences between teaching about Islam and teaching about Islamophobia in both the classroom and wider publics;
- (2) imagine how pedagogical strategies for such teaching have to be tailored to different contexts;
- (3) consider the specific challenges of teaching 'against' a concept instead of teaching 'toward' a more positive end; and (4) understand how Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry function as a form of racism and why naming this bigotry as racism is important.

In the first year, we seek papers from scholars in any discipline or subfield that address questions related to the theme "Islamophobia - Connecting the Global and the Local," with a focus on teaching. An epidemic of anti-Muslim bigotry and racism has emerged not only in the United States and Europe, but globally. Often, however, these events that are important to engaged scholars may feel distant to our students.

We are soliciting submissions that address any of the following aspects of this theme and welcome related topics and inquiries that go beyond these questions as well:

1. What are techniques and strategies that are effective for contextually locating Islamophobia that occurs outside North American cultural contexts?
2. How do we begin to overcome the tendency of students to distance themselves from a shared responsibility for Islamophobia when they are confronted by either global or local instances of anti-Muslim bigotry?
3. What are the competing challenges and advantages of using education about Islamophobia to stimulate interreligious dialogue?
4. When addressing major news stories featuring anti-Muslim policies, what skills do students need to develop in order to move 'beyond the headline?' How might these skills be transferable or adapted to contexts where scholars are asked to address wider publics?
5. What are the professional and scholarly risks and challenges we face when we name anti-Muslim bias in our educational setting or local communities? How do we begin to address these challenges or mitigate these risks?

Papers and other documents related to presentations will be pre-circulated to the seminar listserv. Please contact a member of the leadership of the seminar for access. Since materials will be pre-circulated, preference will be given to presentations that go beyond the traditional 'paper-reading' structure. We seek presentations that will dynamically introduce teaching modules, pedagogical practices, teaching reflections, slides, professional documents or other materials during the time of the seminar.

#### Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Teaching Against Islamophobia Seminar is to widen the network of scholars engaged in critical reflection about pedagogical and discursive praxes that address the global rise of anti-Muslim sentiment. This seminar thus focuses on the challenges and opportunities faced by engaged scholars combating Islamophobia. We invite critical and creative reflection on (1) the differences between teaching about Islam and teaching about Islamophobia in both the classroom and wider publics; (2) pedagogical strategies for such teaching should be tailored to different contexts; (3) specific challenges of teaching 'against' a concept instead of teaching 'toward' a more positive end; and (4) the ways in which Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry function as a form of racism and why naming this bigotry as racism is important. As such, we encourage discussion not only on the transmission of new content knowledge about Islamophobia, but also on the transmission of interpersonal and leadership skills necessary to engage in public life to resist bias, bigotry, and racism.

#### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

#### Chairs:

- Megan Goodwin, Northeastern University  
me.goodwin@northeastern.edu
- Sajida Jalalzai, Trinity University  
sajidajalalzai@gmail.com

## Transnational Religious Expression: Between Asia and North America Seminar

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### Call Text:

Since our 2020 session on "Power and Politics in Transnational Religious Expressions" was postponed, we are not accepting new proposals for 2021. This session, originally arranged for 2020, will be held in 2021. Papers will be posted to the AAR website in advance of the annual meeting to provide ample time for discussion among the panelists, the respondent, and audience members.

Please contact the seminar chairs, Holly Gayley ([gayley@colorado.edu](mailto:gayley@colorado.edu)) and Justin Stein ([justin.stein@kpu.ca](mailto:justin.stein@kpu.ca)) with any questions.

### 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 challenge 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.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Holly Gayley, University of Colorado  
[gayley@colorado.edu](mailto:gayley@colorado.edu)
- Justin Stein, Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
[justin.stein@kpu.ca](mailto:justin.stein@kpu.ca)

## Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty Committee

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Call Text:

Call for Proposals

(1) Open Call

The Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty (ALCF) Committee invites proposals on any topic related to academic labor and contingent faculty, especially those that focus on class inequalities; labor (understood as economic production and/or social reproduction or both); the intersections of class with race, gender/sexuality, disability, and/or environmental degradation; or corporate domination of workers. Please note that this does *not* count toward the two-proposal submission limit within the INSPIRE system.

(2) Possible co-sponsored session

In partnership with the AAR Class, Religion, and Theology Unit, ALCF invites proposals for a possible co-sponsored session that address any aspect of the structure of academic labor or the experiences of contingent faculty, within the discipline of religious and theological studies or in the humanities/academy more broadly. We are especially interested in papers that:

- (a) explore the various forms that contingent academic labor takes and the different experiences of economic precarity and institutional and/or guild status they entail; or
- (b) name and confront (income, power, recognition, or other) barriers to solidarity between contingent and tenured/tenure-eligible faculty and/or between faculty and other higher ed laborers and explore possibilities of fomenting solidarity.

Statement of Purpose

The Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty (ALCF) Committee supports AAR efforts to address a wide range of issues connected to educational institutions' heavy reliance on contingent faculty, including those working on a part-time basis as well as single or multi-year contracts. The ALCF Committee advocates cultural and structural change to ensure just work conditions, pay, and collective bargaining rights for contingent faculty in order to foster equity, labor justice, and the common good in the Academy.

Mission Statement:

The Committee supports the efforts of the American Academy of Religion to address a wide range of issues connected to educational institutions' heavy reliance on contingent faculty, including those working on a part-time basis as well as single or multi-year contracts. The Committee advocates cultural and structural change to ensure just work conditions, pay, and collective bargaining rights for contingent faculty in order to foster

equity, labor justice, and the common good in the Academy. Contingent faculty chair the Committee.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Edwin David Aponte, [eaponte@louisville-institute.org](mailto:eaponte@louisville-institute.org)
- Nicole Kirk, [nkirk@meadville.edu](mailto:nkirk@meadville.edu)

## Graduate Student Committee

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### Call Text:

Inspired by this year's Presidential theme, the Graduate Student Committee Special Topics Forum invites papers that explore the intersections between religion, poverty, and inequality. As scholars who take up the AAR's commitment to the "public understanding of religion," our research alerts us to ways in which religions themselves are shaped by poverty and inequality. How do sacred texts either comfort those confronting structural inequalities or embolden those who occupy positions of wealth and power? How have the social structures created within/by religious communities responded to growing disparities?

As scholars and students, we also occasionally find ourselves as contingent workers, subject to greater structures of inequality including those inherent in the larger institutions and systems to which we belong. As humans, we cannot exclude the challenges faced within our personal lives. This forum adopts a broad understanding of scholarship that asks scholars to reflect on how we can respond to poverty and inequality through our research, service, and teaching.

Connected to this broader theme is the COVID-19 pandemic which upended our worlds in 2020 and continues to shape scholarship and daily life. COVID-19 undeniably created divisions in religions and other social systems. In many cases, however, it may have simply alerted us to divisions that existed all along. This forum also welcomes scholars to reflect on changes that they have observed surrounding religion, poverty, and inequality in light of this pandemic.

We invite proposals for papers that respond to the following questions:

- How has your research or fieldwork expanded your awareness to poverty and/or inequality in religion?
- How has your experience in graduate studies alerted you to poverty and inequality in our academies and systems?
- How has COVID-19 exposed or exacerbated existing inequalities?
- How have religions responded to poverty and inequality during the pandemic?
- How can we as scholars address poverty and inequality in our work:
  - Through research?
  - Through teaching?
  - Through service?
- What does accessibility look like in an increasingly virtual world?
- What can we do as scholars to bridge social justice and social science?
- How are our lives as scholars shaped by both the worlds we study and the worlds we inhabit?
- What role can/should scholars play in changing the social worlds we inhabit?
- How can scholars advocate for social changes within the academy itself?
- How have we advocated for the creation of supportive spaces? How has the academy responded?

We especially encourage scholars to present papers in which they reflect on the overlap between their lived experiences and their research, and how this overlap illuminates

issues of religion, poverty, and inequality. We hope to make this panel an inclusive and open conversation.

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for papers which could be presented in 10-15 minutes. Please email your proposal (~250 words) and a CV to Shaunesse' Jacobs ([sajaco2@bu.edu](mailto:sajaco2@bu.edu)) and Chris Miller ([c22mille@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:c22mille@uwaterloo.ca)) by February 26, 2021. Please note that this proposal does not count toward the two-proposal submission limit within the INSPIRE system.

Method of Submission:

- 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)

Chairs:

- Michael McLaughlin, Florida State University  
[michael.mclaughlin243@gmail.com](mailto:michael.mclaughlin243@gmail.com)
- Aarti Patel, Syracuse University  
[aartipatel16@gmail.com](mailto:aartipatel16@gmail.com)
- Joe Paxton, Claremont School of Theology  
[j.paxton@live.com](mailto:j.paxton@live.com)

## Women's Caucus

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### Call Text:

#### International Scholars - Gender, Religion, Poverty and Inequality

The AAR/ SBL Women's Caucus invites submissions from international scholars, particularly those residing outside of the United States, to present on the intersection of their work on women, gender, religion and theology with the AAR's Annual Conference Theme for 2021: "Religion, Poverty and Inequality: Contemplating Our Collective Futures." We are particularly interested in research that raises fresh questions and identifies phenomena that have been obstructed or not adequately explored; draws on theory and praxis; introduces perspectives from underrepresented religious and spiritual traditions; and considers the ways that scholarship outside of the US makes important contributions to the US academic discourses on religion, poverty and inequality.

#### New Books on Gender and Religion

The AAR/SBL Women's Caucus invites proposals from scholars who have published books on gender and religion in 2019 and 2020. Authors will provide an overview of their books and share their research in theology, biblical studies or religious studies, with a focus on its intersection with gender, sexuality, feminist or queer studies. These scholars will also share their experiences regarding strategies and mechanics for getting books on gender and religion published, make suggestions on how to overcome publication challenges in the guild and offer advice to those seeking publication of their own book manuscripts.

#### Emerging Scholars - Gender, Religion, Poverty and Inequality

The AAR/SBL Women's Caucus invites submissions from graduate students and early career scholars engaged in reimagining normative concepts and/or frameworks within the feminist study of religion and theology. We are particularly interested in proposals that introduce innovation and enhances nuanced understandings of religious practices. We invite the upcoming generation of scholars to share their research and perspectives on methodologies, pedagogies and political strategies, particularly those that respond to AAR's Annual Conference theme in 2021 on "Religion, Inequality, and Poverty."

#### Biographies about Women in Religion – Interreligious Harmony and Knowledge Equity: Issues for Women in the Parliament of the World's Religions

This panel gathers biographies about women who are noteworthy participants in the Parliament of the World's Religions since its inception in 1893 but whose gender, geographical location, economic status and occupation obscures their significance. This lack of coverage is fueled by an 18th century definition of knowledge that privileges the scientific method and masculine achievement even as it discounts knowledge and histories that are oral, embodied and unpublished. In order to increase access to secondary sources, we are seeking biographies about women who (1) have represented their religious and spiritual traditions as leaders, organizers and speakers at the Parliament (2) are noteworthy as founders, practitioners, teachers, resisters and

researchers of the world's religious and wisdom traditions and (3) do not have a biographical entry on Wikipedia. Original research including interviews of living subjects, oral histories, transcriptions of existing recordings and historical documents is encouraged. Proposals must demonstrate strong analytical engagement with the issues of knowledge equity and gender parity. Panel proposals may be adapted and submitted as chapter proposals for inclusion in the third volume of the Women in Religion series (<https://books.atla.com/atlapress/catalog/series/wir>). Please consult our separate call for chapter proposals for deadline and submission instructions.

Mission Statement:

The Women's Caucus encourages and creates opportunities for academic activism in the field of Gender and Religion. It also provides a welcoming space for women at the AAR/SBL national conferences for networking and support.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Colleen D. Hartung, 1000 Women in Religion Wikipedia Project  
kchartung@aol.com
- Elaine Nogueira-Godsey, Methodist Theological School in Ohio  
egodsey@mtso.edu
- Elizabeth Ursic, Mesa Community College  
elizabeth.ursic@mesacc.edu

## African Association for the Study of Religion

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### Call Text:

1. In Memory of John Mbiti

We solicit papers that explore the legacy and impact of John Mbiti's work in both the Academy and the Church, especially his work to foster ecumenism. We welcome engagement on a variety of topics including his many books, his approach to the relationship between the African church and the global communion, and his influence in the creation of the field of African religions in Christianity.

This session is a panel with formal papers. Please submit proposals for 15-minute papers.

2. In Memory of John Pobee

We solicit papers that explore the legacy and impact of John Pobee's work in both the Academy and the Church. We solicit papers that engage his work in African Christianity, religion, and culture, particularly ecclesiology and missiology in global perspective.

This session is a panel with formal papers. Please submit proposals for 15-minute papers.

3. Religion(s), Natural Disasters, and Pandemics

More than many peoples, Africans read their lives religiously, especially inexplicable phenomena. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and past pandemics that have affected the Continent, like HIV/AIDS, the Ebola crisis, and other natural disasters, we invite papers that explore how religion is utilized by affected communities to explain such phenomena and sustain themselves. We especially welcome papers that explore the history of the use of religion and religious attitudes from ancient/traditional to modern/technological times.

This session is a panel with formal papers. Please submit proposals for 15-minute papers.

### Mission Statement:

The African Association for the Study of Religions is an academic association of the scholars of religions posted in universities in Africa, and of scholars of the religions of Africa posted in universities outside Africa. It was founded at an IAHR (International Association for the History of Religions) conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, in September 1992 for the purpose of promoting the academic study of the religions of Africa more generally through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The AASR seeks to stimulate the academic study of religions of Africa in a variety of ways: providing a forum for multilateral communications between scholars of African religions; facilitating the exchange of resources and information; encouraging the development of linkages and research contacts between scholars and institutions in Africa, and between scholars in Africa and those overseas. The AASR also endeavors to assist scholars to publish their work and travel to professional

meetings. The AASR is an affiliate of the IAHR since 1995. It meets at the IAHR quinquennial congress and organizes conferences in Africa. Its members participate in panels at conferences outside of Africa. The AASR publishes the bi-annual AASR Bulletin and maintains a web site: [www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org). AASR publishes peer-reviewed an online journal that is available at <http://www.a-asr.org/journal/guidelines-for-authors/>.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Tim Hartman, Columbia Theological Seminary  
[hartmant@ctsnet.edu](mailto:hartmant@ctsnet.edu)
- Nathanael Homewood, Rice University  
[nathanael.j.homewood@gmail.com](mailto:nathanael.j.homewood@gmail.com)
- Damaris Parsitau, Egerton University  
[dparsitau@yahoo.com](mailto:dparsitau@yahoo.com)

## Colloquium on Violence and Religion

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Call Text:

The Colloquium on Violence & Religion section invites paper proposals on the following themes:

- Papers related to the pandemic that apply mimetic theory to analysis about the pandemic and what it reveals about our common humanity, with particular attention to religious themes
- Topics related to an examination of mimetic theory in relation to the theme of friendship, for example, around the themes of friendship and religious experience, friendship in the context of us/them bias in society, friendship in conflict and reconciliation, and the theme of social friendship in conversation with the recent papal encyclical “Fratelli Tutti,”
- Topics related to eucharistic practice and the theme of spirituality

In addition, we invite a panel proposal on recent books related to mimetic theory, in particular, Giuseppe Fornari’s *Dionysus, Christ, and the Death of God* (Michigan State Press, 2020).

Proposals should be between 200-500 words and will be judged anonymously through the AAR’s INSPIRE portal, where proposals should be submitted.

Mission Statement:

The Colloquium on Violence and Religion is an international association of scholars founded in 1990. It is dedicated to the exploration, criticism, and development of René Girard’s mimetic model of the relationship between violence and religion in the genesis and maintenance of culture. In promoting research in mimetic theory, COVandR welcomes scholars and others from diverse fields and theoretical orientations who are interested in the foundational role of imitation in individual human lives and cultures. In addition to gathering at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, the Colloquium meets each summer, alternating between North American and European venues. COVandR’s publications include a website (<http://violenceandreligion.com>), a book series, *Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*, published by Michigan State University Press, the journal *Contagion* and a biannual newsletter, *Bulletin of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion*.

The coordinator of COVandR at the AAR is Professor Grant Kaplan, Saint Louis University ([grant.kaplan@slu.edu](mailto:grant.kaplan@slu.edu)). COVandR membership information: <http://violenceandreligion.com/about/membership>.

Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

Chairs:

- Grant Kaplan, Saint Louis University  
[Grant.kaplan@slu.edu](mailto:Grant.kaplan@slu.edu)
- Martha Reineke, University of Northern Iowa  
[marthareineke@gmail.com](mailto:marthareineke@gmail.com)
- Chelsea King, Sacred Heart University  
[king2@sacredheart.edu](mailto:king2@sacredheart.edu)
- Brian Robinette, Boston College  
[brian.robinette@bc.edu](mailto:brian.robinette@bc.edu)

## North American Paul Tillich Society

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### Call Text:

For its November 19, 2021 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, immediately prior to the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, the North American Paul Tillich Society seeks paper or panel proposals for two sessions. We seek papers that either interpret Tillich in his historical context with implications drawn for present concerns, or that engage Tillich as a theological resource, either constructively or methodologically, for addressing contemporary society and culture. The generality of this call reflects the desire of the board to engage broadly across the interests represented in the Society and to draw beyond our current membership to welcome new and compelling voices into our number.

Panels at the 2021 meeting will be limited to 90 minutes, and so we would prefer papers and panels that commit to pre-circulating papers so that the meeting time may focus on brief summaries, engagement among panelists, and engagement with annual meeting participants.

Paper proposals should include a 300 word abstract and a CV. Panel proposals should include a 200 word abstract of the panel and 300 word abstracts of each of the papers on the panel along with CVs of each of the participants. Proposals should be submitted to binsong1981@gmail.com no later than April 1, 2021. Accepted papers or panels will be notified by May 1, and papers are encouraged to be submitted for pre-circulation by September 15.

### Mission Statement:

Founded in 1975, the 250-member NAPTS is concerned with Paul Tillich's (1886-1965) philosophical-theological thought, with its analysis, critique, and revision; with the implications and the use of this thought in political, social, psychotherapeutic, scientific, artistic, and ethicoreligious spheres; the application of Tillich's thought to questions he himself could never have imagined in his lifetime; finally, with the impact and the creative extension of Tillich's legacy.

The Society meets annually in conjunction with AAR, organizes international conferences, collaborates with the German, French speaking, and several other Tillich societies, awards an annual student paper prize, and sponsors publications. The quarterly Bulletin carries papers from meetings and other information on Tillich, publication, letters, et al. Dues \$50/year.

Membership: Frederick Parrella, Religious Studies, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA,

95053-0335 or fparrella@scu.edu. More information is available at <http://www.napts.org/>.

Method of Submission:

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

Chairs:

- Nord, Ilona, University of Würzburg  
[ilona.nord@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:ilona.nord@uni-wuerzburg.de)
- Verna Ehret, Mercyhurst University  
[vehret@mercyhurst.edu](mailto:vehret@mercyhurst.edu)
- Song, Bin, Washington College  
[binsong1981@gmail.com](mailto:binsong1981@gmail.com)
- Whitney, Lawrence, Boston University  
[brlawrencelc@mac.com](mailto:brlawrencelc@mac.com)

## Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies

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### Call Text:

The Society was organized to provide a forum for scholars and artists interested in the intersections between theology, religion, and the arts, to share thoughts, challenge ideas, strategize approaches in the classroom, and to advance the discipline in theological and religious studies curricula. The goal of the Society is to attract consistent participation of a core group of artists and scholars of theology and religion in order to have dialogue about the theological and religious meaning of the arts, and the artistic/aesthetic dimension of theological and religious inquiry.

### Mission Statement:

SARTS is a community of scholars and artists who seek to understand the deepest levels of relationship between works of art and religious sensibility. Our focus is concrete aesthetic encounter with the arts and their religious, ethical and theological interpretation. While originating in the Christian traditions of theological reflection, we seek constructive conversation and critical inquiry that will make sense of a world of increasing cross-influences, both in art and among religious traditions. Through scholarly exchange we explore how art shapes human ways of being in the world. At the same time we explore how the study of art at the intersection of religious and theological traditions leads to artistic vision and to aesthetic modes of perception, practice, and thought. The Society is committed to the implications of these discussions for the teaching of theological and religious approaches to art, and for the nurturing of both recognized and emerging artists and scholars whose work will shape the future of theological and religious understandings of human existence. For more information, see <https://www.societyarts.org/>.

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- Jennifer Awes-Freeman, United Seminary  
[Jawes-freeman@unitedseminary.edu](mailto:Jawes-freeman@unitedseminary.edu)
- Cindi Beth Johnson, United Seminary  
[cbjohnson@unitedseminary.edu](mailto:cbjohnson@unitedseminary.edu)
- Paul Myhre, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion  
[myhrep@wabash.edu](mailto:myhrep@wabash.edu)

## Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts

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### Call Text:

The Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts (SCRIPT) encourages new scholarship on iconic and performative texts. Our goal is to foster academic discourse about the social functions of books and texts that exceed their semantic meaning and interpretation, such as their display as cultural artifacts, their ritual use in religious and political ceremonies, their performance by recitation and theater, and their depiction in art. For 2021, SCRIPT invites paper proposals on any aspect of iconic and performative texts.

### Mission Statement:

The Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts (SCRIPT) invites proposals for papers that examine the social and cultural functions of books and texts beyond their semantic meaning and interpretation. For one session, SCRIPT invites proposals on "digital sacred texts." With the digital turn, texts are encountered in new material forms that impact the ways they are read, recited, and interacted with. Questions we hope to think about include: What is gained or lost when a text is used in digital formats, as compared to print culture? How is personal, ritual, or scholarly engagement with sacred texts impacted by the digital turn? Proposals on any aspect of digital sacred texts are welcome.

A second session is an open call for any proposals that examine books and texts in terms of their display as cultural artifacts, their ritual use in religious and political ceremonies, their performance by recitation and theater, their depiction in art, and/or display in museums.

For more information about SCRIPT, please see: <http://script-site.net/>

### Method of Submission:

INSPIRE

### Chairs:

- David Dault, Sandburg Media  
[sandburg.media@gmail.com](mailto:sandburg.media@gmail.com)
- James W, Watts, Syracuse University  
[jwwatts@syr.edu](mailto:jwwatts@syr.edu)