OUR MISSION

The Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University was founded in 1999 to encourage greater intellectual exchange and interdisciplinary scholarly studies about religion among faculty and students in the humanities and social sciences. The Center is committed to scholarly research and teaching that examines religion comparatively and empirically in its diverse historical and contemporary manifestations. It aims to facilitate understanding of religion through a program of support for Princeton faculty to pursue teaching, research, and public event planning; awards for Princeton graduate students to complete dissertation research and undergraduate students to write senior theses and junior papers; two interdisciplinary seminars; undergraduate courses; public lectures and conferences; and opportunities for visiting scholars to affiliate with the Center.
## Table Of Contents

- Programs
  - Religion and Culture Seminar
  - Religion and Public Life Seminar
  - Freshman Seminar
  - Additional Programs
  - Faith & Work
- People
  - Visiting Fellows
  - Graduate Student Fellows
  - Undergraduate Fellows
  - Executive Committee
  - Faculty Associates
  - Advisory Council/Staff
- Events
- Publications
- Next Year
PROGRAMS

The Center offers two weekly interdisciplinary seminars that bring together faculty, visiting scholars, and graduate student fellows to present and discuss research in progress. Papers are prepared and distributed in advance of each week’s meeting. Participants in these seminars develop a level of trust that allows them to share the challenges of writing and offer each other supportive yet critical feedback.

RELIGION AND CULTURE SEMINAR

The Religion and Culture Seminar was led this year by Acting Director Jenny Wiley Legath. This workshop brings together researchers working on historical and ethnographic aspects of religion. Approaches vary, but participants’ work examines the relation between religion and its wider context, whether that context is construed in literary, cultural, anthropological, philosophical, artistic, or other terms. This year’s presentations included such titles as “The First Pregnancy of Eve: an Exegetical Conundrum,” “Narratives of Female Suicide in Medieval Muslim Historiography,” and “A Pre-History of Socially Engaged Buddhism.”

RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE SEMINAR

Led this year by Lecturer in Sociology and Public Policy Timothy Nelson, the Religion and Public Life Seminar brings together scholars engaged in research on the relationships between religion and public policy or between religion and contemporary social issues more generally. Presentations this year included “Religious Freedom or Privilege? Taxpayer Conscience, Pacifists, and Pro-Lifers,” “Old World Blues: Latent Nostalgia in Mordecai Kaplan’s Judaism as a Civilization,” and “Solidarity or Distancing? How Official Status Influences Chinese Protestant Reactions to Repression.”
The goal of the seminar was to explore the question of hospitality at the individual and collective levels (e.g. ranging from offering shelter to a stranger in one’s home to issues of immigration). More specifically, I wanted to look at the ways religion (broadly defined) could influence this notion. The approach was very interdisciplinary, engaging in a wide variety of materials, with sacred texts (Genesis, 18-19; Luke 10:25-37, Ben Jelloun’s Islam Explained…); and secular works of literature (The Odyssey, Camus, Djebar…), linguistics (etymology of “hospitality”), philosophy (Derrida, Sartre…), graphic novels (Persepolis), cinema (The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob, Casablanca…), etc. Matching the diversity of the materials, students were of very different backgrounds—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, some of them international, from Mexico, Puerto Rico, some with familial roots in Algeria, Israel, etc.; and with widely diverse academic and extra-curricular interests: humanities, sciences, politics, ROTC, etc. All of them said they had taken the course because of their interest in the topic, and the level and intensity of the discussions proved, every single time, their enthusiasm. In truth, I cannot remember having a better group of 13 young students in a classroom, all equally bright, motivated, and responsive. The rewards were then many to share: students were grateful for having being exposed to “classics” such as the Odyssey or Casablanca (one student shared it had fulfilled her father’s longtime wish), and getting to learn about issues of immigration, antisemitism, the relations between Jews and Muslims (especially in France and North Africa), or comparing concepts such as biblical cities of refuge and political asylum. It was also the occasion for students to share their own experiences (domestic and abroad), and for me to learn a great deal as well.

**ADDRESSE SEMINAR**

The Center solicits proposals from humanities and social sciences faculty for new undergraduate courses on topics concerned with the study of religion. The Center gives priority to proposals for the freshman seminar, which provides a unique opportunity for students to work in a small setting with a professor and a few other students on a topic of special interest. Such often result in new regular courses being added to the curriculum. Prior to the Center’s efforts in this area, very few freshman seminars were offered on religion. The Center also sponsors occasional advanced undergraduate courses. CSR sponsored one Freshman Seminar in Fall 2019:

**André Benhaïm, Professor of French**

**SACRED GUESTS, SCARED HOSTS: THE RISKS AND REWARDS OF HOSPITALITY IN SECULAR TIMES**

The goal of the seminar was to explore the question of hospitality at the individual and collective levels (e.g. ranging from offering shelter to a stranger in one’s home to issues of immigration). More specifically, I wanted to look at the ways religion (broadly defined) could influence this notion. The approach was very interdisciplinary, engaging in a wide variety of materials, with sacred texts (Genesis, 18-19; Luke 10:25-37, Ben Jelloun’s Islam Explained…); and secular works of literature (The Odyssey, Camus, Djebar…), linguistics (etymology of “hospitality”), philosophy (Derrida, Sartre…), graphic novels (Persepolis), cinema (The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob, Casablanca…), etc. Matching the diversity of the materials, students were of very different backgrounds—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, some of them international, from Mexico, Puerto Rico, some with familial roots in Algeria, Israel, etc.; and with widely diverse academic and extra-curricular interests: humanities, sciences, politics, ROTC, etc. All of them said they had taken the course because of their interest in the topic, and the level and intensity of the discussions proved, every single time, their enthusiasm. In truth, I cannot remember having a better group of 13 young students in a classroom, all equally bright, motivated, and responsive. The rewards were then many to share: students were grateful for having being exposed to “classics” such as the Odyssey or Casablanca (one student shared it had fulfilled her father’s longtime wish), and getting to learn about issues of immigration, antisemitism, the relations between Jews and Muslims (especially in France and North Africa), or comparing concepts such as biblical cities of refuge and political asylum. It was also the occasion for students to share their own experiences (domestic and abroad), and for me to learn a great deal as well.

**ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS**

CSR sponsors additional programs advancing research and teaching. The Buddhist Studies Workshop, which began in 1998 as an interdisciplinary forum for new scholarly work on Buddhism. It is designed to bring together people from different departments to discuss common topics. Workshop events are often co-sponsored by other academic units. This year the Center also continued a series begun last year entitled “Writing about Religion” These events are intended to help students and faculty bring their scholarship on religion to a public audience. For event details, please see page 22-25. Finally, each week the Center hosts an informal “Silent Writing Workshop” which brings together a community of writers each Monday morning for camaraderie and accountability.
This is the twelfth annual Faith & Work Initiative (FWI) letter I have written for the Center for the Study of Religion (CSR) annual report. And with mixed emotions, it will also be my last one. Effective July 1, 2020 FWI moved organizationally from CSR into the Keller Center for Innovation (KCI), part of Princeton’s School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

Looking back over the past 12 years, I have nothing but respect, appreciation, and admiration for Bob Wuthnow, who brought me from Yale to Princeton to found and direct the Faith & Work Initiative in 2008. FWI studies the intersection of faith and work, undertaking interdisciplinary research to benefit scholars and practitioners alike. Bob’s support, coupled with the terrific associate research scholars who surrounded and supported me, the overwhelmingly positive response from students and alumni, the interest by practitioners and corporate leaders, and generous donor support, have combined to put FWI at the forefront of research, programs, teaching and wider thought leadership in the field of faith/spirituality and work.

In this CSR Annual Report, you will read separately about my two FWI colleagues, Michael Thate and Nicoleta Acatrinei and the innovative and groundbreaking scholarship and research they are conducting. My own projects of completing the new and revised edition of my book, God at Work: the History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement, along with advancing newer projects on The Integration Profile (TIP), Workplace Chaplaincy, Ethical Fitness, and Faith Friendly Companies will continue in the Keller Center for Innovation. Similarly, the well-received Faith & Ethics in the Executive Suite interview series will carry on in KCI, building on our library of more than three dozen CEO interviews. My public speaking and presenting at universities and other organizations around the globe on ethics, leadership, culture, and faith at work have brought the FWI team recognition as thought leaders and innovators. A highlight of this past academic year was presenting a white paper (co-authored with my colleague Michael Thate) in January 2020 in Davos, Switzerland, entitled “Towards a Restoration of Trust: Insights and Lessons from Wisdom Traditions.”

For those who have enjoyed or benefited from FWI’s research and public voice, we hope you will continue to follow us in our new Keller Center home. Happily, FWI will still have a close relationship with CSR and the Department of Religion. My thanks again to Bob Wuthnow, Jenny Legath, and Anita Kline for their exceptional collegiality, friendship, and support; to the FWI advisory Board for their wisdom and generosity; and to the many alumni and other practitioner friends for their support and encouragement. And last but not least, my thanks for the many students I had the good fortune to teach, mentor, and learn from.
This year I continued work on my current research project, "Scented Life: The Sillage of Early Christian Difference and Sensual Wonder," which considers the formation of early Christian perception in conversation with discourses on social space, moral judgments, and ethical reasoning. The ethical reasoning has connections to FWI and contemporary moral decision-making. During the fall term, I served as a Preceptor for Professor Elaine Pagels’ REL 252 course, “Jesus: How Christianity Began,” which proved to be the best educational experience I have had thus far. An additional highlight was co-authoring with David Miller a white paper entitled “Towards the Restoration of Trust: Insights and Lessons from Wisdom Traditions,” which he presented in Davos. I’ve also been working with David on a “Humanities for Business” symposium and preparing an interdisciplinary seminar on “Work and Play.”
Ruth Braunstein

I will remember this year as a Visiting Fellow at CSR as a time marked by warm collegiality, new friendships, and conversations within and beyond my own discipline that have meaningfully shaped the course of my current research. While much of my time this year was devoted to collecting data for my current project on the moral meanings of taxpaying, I also began to write and present some early findings. In particular, the feedback I received from the Religion and Public Life Workshop led by Timothy Nelson was especially useful as I move the project forward.

Devin Singh

My research project this year explored the links between religion, debt, and state sovereignty. It follows the metaphors of debt bondage and debt cancellation in Christian and Jewish scripture to a historical economic study of the origins of these practices in the ancient Near East, showing how they are linked to the emergence of political sovereignty and forms of centralized rule. My aim is to shed light on the widespread nature of debt practices and debt-based inequality in Western societies as partly authorized and given power through religious language, concepts, and practices.

Leslie Wingard

“The Arts and Acts of Faith” considers African American works of literary, visual, musical, and performance art from the 1920s until the present. Throughout this archive of photographs, films, short stories, and songs, binaries are prefigured, constructed, disavowed, dismantled, and discarded between Christianity and progressive politics, often with regard to gender and sexuality. These artists and scholars prompt us to imagine the benefits of a more open conceptualization of Christianity by showing the productive dissonance that stems from constant contact between Christianity, progressive politics, and issues of gender and sexuality.
RELIGION AND CULTURE

This dissertation is an analysis of the ways Muslim authors spoke about traditions they deemed “un-islamic.” It attempts to address the question of how Islamic civilization emerged from Late Antiquity by using the reception of Jewish and Christian traditions as a lens to study the origins of Islamic identity. I argue that part of the story of the emergence of Islamic identity is a reckoning with the influence of Judaism and Christianity. Regardless of the discourses surrounding hadith, legal theory, and tafsīr, Muslims continued to transmit traditions of the People of the Book, often due to popular demand. This popular culture had an enduring legacy in the Islamic tradition, and I argue that we cannot understand the emergence of Islamic identity without respecting the contribution of countless nameless individuals whose activities were often at odds with elite interests.

Joshua Bauchner, History of Science and Humanities, “The Life of the Mind: Scientific Concept and Everyday Experience from Psychophysics to Psychoanalysis”
My dissertation offers a historical phenomenology of the mind-body relation across the sciences of nineteenth-century Germanic Europe. It tracks how the pursuit of this ineffable relation appeared in specific scientific concepts and everyday experiences in the life and work of two connection figures: the physicist Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887) and the physician Josef Breuer (1842–1925). I identify for each a concept that was at the crux of his scientific investigation and an experience that was integral to his daily life. For Fechner, these were the *threshold* and *taking a walk*, and for Breuer, *balance* and *having a conversation*. With close reading of published work and thick description of experiences from archival material, I show how these two concept-experience dyads were homologous appearances of the mind-body inquiry; while the concept named and tracked it scientifically, the experience brought its complexities forward on an everyday basis. As the first systematic investigation of quotidian experience in the historiography of modern science, “The Life of the Mind” opens new methodological pathways to holistically understanding the development of scientific problems while also reframing this historical period, the height of professionalizing laboratory science.

Chiara Benetollo, Comparative Literature, “Languages of Pronatalism: Literature, Politics, and Public Health in the Soviet Union and Italy”
In my dissertation I explore the relationship between Soviet, Italian Communist and Catholic representations of childbirth and maternity, focusing on a number of pronatalist topoi and medical innovations that circulated between the Soviet Union and Italy following the Second World War and into the late fifties. My research complicates traditional Cold-War narratives: rejecting the polar opposition between the Western and Soviet blocs, I investigate how the Soviet government, the Italian Communist Party and the Catholic Church struggled to define their position in relation to and in contrast with one another, while fundamentally sharing the single core value of pronatalism.

Yuanxin Chen, East Asian Studies, “At the Intersection of Religion and Historiography: Commemorating Exemplary Figures in Early Chinese Historical Biographies”
My dissertation focuses on one of the most prominent genres of historical writing in imperial China (221 BCE –1912 CE): biography. The life stories of figures from different social strata were compiled into the largest section of many Chinese dynastic histories: the “Arrayed Traditions” (liezhuan) or the “Traditions” (zhuan). As self-contained accounts devoted to individual lives, these biographies played a significant role in constructing Chinese imperial ideologies. My study traces back to the beginning of this biographical tradition. By focusing on the most important works of early imperial Chinese historiography, the Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji) and the History of the Han (Hanshu), I address how and why the biographical genre emerged as a prevalent form of narrative history over the course of the Han dynasty. My research shows that Han historiographers adopted
the biographical genre to 1) transform the ways in which historical knowledge was used in philosophical and sociopolitical debates; 2) provide balanced evaluations of people based on their qualities and deeds; and 3) to develop diverse causes to explain the successes and failures in individual lives. Moreover, these purposes overlapped with the historiographers’ ambition to construct ideological “landscapes” for the Han dynasty. In particular, by compiling biographies of hundreds of individuals from different walks of life, the historiographers covered an unprecedentedly broad scope of sociopolitical issues. To resolve these issues, the historiographers evaluated individuals, who were often categorized into archetypes, to establish models of different social roles. They also provided moral causes for individual successes and failures, which were intertwined with the rise and fall of clans and states, to prescribe ethical principles.

Rebecca Faulkner, Religion, “Muhammad Iqbal and the Meanings of South Asian Islamic Modernism”

This thesis focuses on a highly influential South Asian Islamic modernist’s moral reasoning on key debates like those on the nature of good governance, economic justice, and the use of foundational texts in reformist thought. British Indian poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (d.1938) argues for dynamic, vital remaking of the self and the community through his poetry and prose in Urdu, Persian, and English. Iqbal’s work intervenes in a crucial moment in the history of South Asia, declaring the need for a new understanding of Muslim life in light of what he felt was a pivotal—opportunity as well as desperate—moment for reviving Islam and the Muslim community on the cusp of the Partition of India. I use this work to explore the ways in which conditions of domination, for example that of colonial India, affect the imagination of good governance. I also analyze the relationship between economic and religious framings of moral reasoning in the pursuit of just economic conditions. Furthermore, I demonstrate that debates over the use and interpretation of foundational texts show a wide range of Muslim scholars participating in tradition so that the shared, co-constituted intellectual history can come to the forefront. Politics, economics, and religious reform are examples of fields in which Iqbal envisions a future for moral reasoning, and these examples stand against existing scholarship on the meaning of religion and place of moral reasoning in modernity. I argue that Iqbal’s work offers an opportunity to challenge the scholarly narrative toward an expanded understanding of moral possibilities in modernity.

Megan Gilbert, East Asian Studies, “Conciliators and Fixed Points: Dispute Resolution in Fifteenth-Century Japan”

My dissertation focuses on central Japan in the early fifteenth century, a moment of comparative peace but also desperate improvisation. The administrative and judicial institutions that once channeled and legitimated warrior government had become mutable, subject to the whims of increasingly authoritarian shoguns. The dissertation shows how written oaths, yearly rites, and large ceremonies provided certainty where institutions no longer could. It examines the role of conciliators, including the head of a powerful Buddhist temple, a retired scholar of Chinese classics, an estate administrator and former court musician, and the dowager concubine of a shogun, and how these unofficial intermediaries used status and social ties to navigate the era’s ritual fulcrums to resolve conflicts.
Ariana Myers, History, "I Once Was Lost: Between Christian and Muslim in the Crown of Aragon, 1225–1339"  
This dissertation seeks to explore the many meanings assigned to religious affiliation within the Crown of Aragon, a medieval polity on the eastern littoral of the Iberian Peninsula, and the enormous shifts those underwent during the thirteenth century. Recent scholarship on interfaith Iberian history has highlighted several apparently contradictory models for understanding religion — ranging from the legal to the political to the cultural. In order to move this discussion forward, I will ascertain the uses and meanings of each of these contemporary medieval understandings of religion by focusing on those who moved between the categories of Christian and Muslim.

Cody Musselman, Visiting Graduate Student Fellow, “Embodying the Brand: Fitness and Colloquial Religion in the United States” 
This dissertation combines ethnographic and archival research to explain the rise and endurance of branded exercise regimens, like SoulCycle and CrossFit, that claim religious and spiritual authority in the lives of their participants. It explores how religion is produced by commercial entities and theorized by wellness seekers. These theorizations, which I call colloquial religion, demonstrate how the narratives, categories, and questions of religious studies manifest in popular culture as fun spiritual diversions and serious acts of devotion. At its heart, this dissertation is a meditation on the use of comparative methods within Religious Studies.

Liora Selinger, English, “Romanticism, Childhood, and the Poetics of Explanation” 
My work examines scenes of education in Romantic-era British literature for and about children in which adults and children converse about God, death, the afterlife, truth, aesthetic taste, subjectivity, and that which eludes memory. These moments of uncertainty in explanation spark innovative theories of childhood and dialogic learning for the authors at the core of my study: Anna Letitia Barbauld, Charles and Mary Lamb, William Wordsworth, Thomas De Quincey, and Lewis Carroll. In contrast to adults authoritatively "giving an explanation," these authors invite children and readers to arrive at understanding by participating in, rather than passively receiving, an explanation. They envision the child not as Locke's “blank slate” or Rousseau's solitary ideal. Instead, children are capable participants in social exchange who surprise adults with their own knowledge and selfhood, inciting adults to experiment with participatory pedagogic language. These emerging ethics of student-centered, participatory learning—and the literary innovations that they produced—were rooted in philosophies and inquiries of Protestantism and Dissent with which these authors engaged. These authors also brought new life to traditions in religious education. By engaging with previously unexamined religious perspectives on knowledge and education from the era, I offer an enriched account of the dynamic educational theory as well aesthetic innovation of Romantic experiments with language, genre, and form. British Romantic literature, I argue, both shaped, and was shaped by, attempts to communicate in the face of the limits of knowledge.

Emily Silkaitis, Religion, “Suicide, Morality, and the Specter of Death in Islam, 1st/7th–6th/12th Centuries”  
Although suicide is prohibited by Islamic law and doctrine, suicidal acts (defined as threats, attempts and successful executions of self-killing) are not absent from the historical record. If we cannot say they were eager, medieval Muslim authors also were not loath to report, or depict in detail, acts of self-killing. In this vein, my dissertation “Social Meanings of Suicide in Islam, c. 1st/7th – 6th/12th centuries” approaches suicide in Islam from the perspective of cultural history rather than in the context of jihad and martyrdom, as is the dominant tendency in this line of historical inquiry. This project delves deeply into discursive sources, utilizing stories of suicide found in historical and literary writings, analyzing tropes of suicide used in the political sphere and in polemics, and employing Quranic and extra-Quranic material to explore trends in religious representations of suicide. Framing stories of suicide through these theological, political, and popular lenses more precisely captures the range and meaning of self-killing in medieval Islam and sheds lights on the historical constitution of the self and emotions as well as its relationship to religious and cultural identity. Taking into account legal dimensions also, this dissertation draws upon a robust and diverse body of sources to reveal a surprisingly complicated and nuanced picture of the meaning of suicide in Islam.

Chloe Vettier, French and Italian, “Writing out Shame: from Augustin to Jean Genet” 
My dissertation examines shame as an emblematic motif of the writing of the self. It aims to shed new light on autobiography by showing that shame is not only a commonplace of the genre, but also one of its main, albeit overlooked, characteristics. The first part of my dissertation investigates the origin of this motif, contending that it descends from two discursive Christian traditions: that of auricular confessions on one hand, and on the other hand, that of written confessions, initiated by Augustine (354–430) and secularized in France by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). By looking at this double lineage, I argue that the presence of shame as a theme of the autobiographical discourse provides the reader with a guarantee of its reliability. The second part of my dissertation consists of two case studies focusing on the texts of two contemporary French authors: Maurice Sachs (1906-1945) and Jean Genet (1910–1986). Looking at their autobiographical works, I demonstrate how their use of shame as the main theme of their autobiographies reveals an intention to destabilize, and even change the terms of a Christian discursive tradition. Yet, although they seem subversive, Sachs and Genet’s autobiographies corroborate the Christian-based idea that shame is the most accurate expression of the self, which gives full power to any autobiographical text.
David J. Chari, Religion, “Theorizing Social Consciousness: Lü Cheng (1896–1989) and the Rise of a New Buddhist Idealism in Modern China” Why did many modern Chinese intellectuals celebrate an extreme form of Buddhist idealism—Yogācāra (the school of consciousness-only)—at a time when science, realism, and social Darwinism were dominating early twentieth-century China? To understand this apparent paradox, this dissertation traces the intellectual journey of the renowned advocate of Yogācāra and the first Buddhologist of modern China, Lü Cheng (1896–1989). In the 1920s, the radical young Lü Cheng called for an aesthetic revolution. He soon turned to consciousness-only philosophy as the prime resource for renewing society. This study reveals that Buddhist idealism appealed to many modern Chinese intellectuals for its powerful social critique. In the early twentieth century, “social reality” became an independent category of intellectual inquiry, freed from the reigns of politics and religion. The dominant sociological view defines social reality as objectively existing and subject to scientific studies. This sociological view worked in tandem with social Darwinism to depict individuals as passively controlled by natural laws and bereft of moral agency. To reinject human agency into the realm of the collective, Lü renewed ancient Yogācāra critiques of realism and materialism and redefined social reality as an intersubjective oneness subject to karmic causal laws. Consciousness-only doctrines proved effective in counterbalancing scientific realism, remedying the ills of capitalist materialism, avoiding the solipsist trap, and redefining social evolution as collective spiritual progress.

Jessica Zu, Religion, “Theorizing Social Consciousness: Lü Cheng (1896–1989) and the Rise of a New Buddhist Idealism in Modern China” Augustine believed that the relationship of master to slave can be just. “Slaves of God” explains why and also argues that Augustine’s account of slavery was closely connected to the rest of his broader thought. It situates Augustine in a tradition of Roman reflection on slavery. Three crucial figures in this tradition— Cicero, Seneca, and Lactantius. Augustine concluded that chattel slavery is just when masters train the slaves to become Christians. Because he believed that slavery to God is true freedom, chattel slavery has a liberative purpose. The subsequent chapters of the dissertation explore the connections between Augustine’s account of slavery and other core themes in his ethics and politics: law, citizenship, and religion. Augustine believed that temporal laws can have a perfective purpose because the best temporal laws will help correct a person’s dispositions, not merely their actions. Someone who acts rightly for the wrong reasons remains a slave of sin; only a law that helps correct a person’s dispositions can secure their true freedom. True citizens of the heavenly city are faithful slaves of God; everyone else is a fugitive. Thus, Augustine rejected the traditional Roman opposition between slavery and citizenship. Finally, Augustine closely associated religion’s paradigmatic activity—worship—and slavery, such that a person is enslaved to whatever they worship. As he believed that all humans worship something, Augustine thought that slavery is ubiquitous. There is no question of whether a person will be a slave to something; the only question is what. If that’s so, then the best strategy is to be a slave to a good master. Augustine identified the only good master as the Christian God.

Olaoluwatoni Alimi, Religion, “Slaves of God” This dissertation combines ethnographic and archival research to explain the rise and endurance of branded exercise regimens, like SoulCycle and CrossFit, that claim religious and spiritual authority in the lives of their participants. It explores how religion is produced by commercial entities and theorized by wellness seekers. These theorizations, which I call colloquial religion, demonstrate how the narratives, categories, and questions of religious studies manifest in popular culture as fun spiritual diversions and serious acts of devotion. At its heart, this dissertation is a meditation on the use of comparative methods within Religious Studies.

Megan Brand, Politics, “Aiming Higher: The Politics of International Refugee Law in Domestic Contexts” Although crises produce uneven, unpredictable distribution of refugees globally, states do not negotiate arrangements to distribute refugee admissions according to some equitable formula. Instead, states negotiate agreements and then selectively apply provisions in the midst of forced migrations. Perhaps surprisingly, given states’ reticence to take responsibility for non-citizens fleeing persecution, historical evidence shows that under certain circumstances, states
have admitted large numbers of refugees when they could have chosen not to. Even more complicated is the fact that refugee policy is an extension of foreign policy, yet the admissions of foreigners is usually governed by domestic immigration laws. What factors influence foreign policy leaders to admit refugees? When states admit large numbers of refugees, what types of legal tools, both international and domestic, do states use to classify, aid, and resettle refugees? To answer these questions, the dissertation examines the emergence of global and regional refugee agreements, looking at negotiations by states in the drafting process and subsequent treaty applications to refugees covered by the agreement. It offers a two-part theory based on foreign policy strategy bounded by particularities of domestic legal systems.

**Killian Clarke**, Politics, “Overthrowing Revolution: The Emergence and Success of Counterrevolution, 1900-2015”

This dissertation considers the phenomenon of counterrevolution, both cross-nationally and in the specific case of Egypt from 2011 to 2013. Counterrevolutions have emerged following roughly half of all successful revolutions in the 20th and 21st centuries, but only about one in five of those revolutions have been successfully overthrown. This dissertation probes why counterrevolutionary challenges emerge after some revolutions but not others, and why so few of these challenges succeed. It argues that counterrevolutionaries seek to return to power when they have both considerable stakes in the old order and enough capacity after the revolution to launch a challenge. However, paradoxically, counterrevolutionaries with the most desire for restoration are often those with the least means to effect it. Counterrevolutions succeed only rarely because revolutionaries enjoy a power advantage in the immediate aftermath of a revolution; old regime forces can only return to office if revolutionaries somehow squander some of the resources they accrued during the revolution. This puts certain revolutionaries at an advantage over others: revolutionaries with hard resources like parties, militias, or foreign allies will be better able to resist counterrevolutionaries than those that depend on diverse “negative” coalitions and the continuous mobilization of social support. The implications are that successful counterrevolutions mostly occur after liberal-democratic revolutions, and when new revolutionary governments alienate elite allies in their coalition and fail to consolidate their social support, giving counterrevolutionaries a path toward rebuilding their domestic base. I explore and validate key elements of this theory with an original dataset of all counterrevolutions globally since 1900. I then unpack the processual dynamics leading to successful counterrevolutionaries with a focused case study of Egypt’s 2013 counterrevolution, drawing on nearly one hundred interviews with Egyptian elites and a dataset of eighteen months of protests sourced from an Egyptian Arabic-language newspaper.

**Ipsita Dey**, Anthropology, “Fijian Indian Traditional and Spiritual Knowledges of Landscape Management”

In my graduate dissertation work in Anthropology, I aim to conduct an ethnographic study on the displacement of Fijian Indians from ancestral sugar cane plantations, their rapid transition from rural to urban living, the resulting loss in Fijian Indian traditional knowledge about land management, and the consequent visual, physical, and spiritual changes in the Fijian landscape. My interests in anthropologically studying traditional and ancestral knowledge practices and landscape conservation fall within a broader examination of political disruption, racial hierarchies, and historical memories of violence in a post-colonial developing nation (the Fijian Islands). There is a significant paucity of anthropological scholarship on how indigenous and traditional knowledge systems have adapted to agrarian economies, how political unrest has displaced agricultural communities, how traditional knowledge has been lost in this displacement/transition from rural to urban living, and how conservation efforts can be become better informed by privileging the voices of local residents with ancestral knowledge of land and water systems. My project on Fijian Indian displaced sugarcane plantation farmers and the resulting loss of indigenous knowledge fills this intellectual gap in the anthropological literature and engages critically with history, politics, economics, and environmental studies. My guiding research questions, the intellectual debates that I engage in, and my methodologies all push anthropology in a new theoretical direction, namely one that intersects with environmental studies/activism, critical race theory, political history, and trauma studies.


The control of religious institutions is of key importance in authoritarian countries. In China, this control manifests in a system of registration and monitoring which seeks to allow religious behavior within bounds. This dissertation project seeks to explore these boundaries, how believers perceive them, how these boundaries are circumvented, and what effect they have on broader solidarity in the face of repression. Drawing on a year of ethnographic field work in Chinese Churches, I specifically study the day to day religious activities of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, China’s officially sanctioned Protestant religious organization. This project speaks beyond Christians in China to a wide variety of cases, to groups both religious and otherwise. It speaks to literature on why individuals join religious groups, religion under authoritarianism, social movements and repression.


My dissertation examines perceptions and local experiences of religious decline among Catholics in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In the past thirty years, Catholic communities in the Archdiocese have grappled with closing parishes, diminishing and aging membership, and/or the financial burdens of aging historic properties. Through interviews, participant observation, and historical analysis, this dissertation examines these processes of religious change, as
well as the rhetorical and practical strategies communities develop to understand and make meaning of them. My work takes a particular interest in the local investment in and maintenance of religious communities in light of questions about aging, space and place, and rhetorics of decline and transformation.

Thalia Gigerenzer, Anthropology, “Coming of Age in the End Times: An Ethnography of Young Muslim Women in Delhi, India”
Poor women in northern India have undergone what would appear to be a sea change in attitudes towards marriage, work, and education. As record numbers of young women from poor families enter the salaried workforce, the media has heralded the dawn of a new era for Indian women. This change is the most dramatic among Muslim women, who have historically been the least educated social group in India. In my dissertation, I argue that higher levels of education, the experience of salaried work, and delayed marriage has meant that these young, working-class Muslim women are experiencing a new, prolonged window of youth in which they are more enmeshed in the world outside of the home than the previous generation ever was. Drawing on twenty-one months of ethnographic fieldwork in low-income, Muslim neighborhoods in Delhi, I found that this period of extended independence and exploration often ends abruptly with marriage, after which these women are expected to limit their interactions with the outside, perceived-to-be hostile world: this means quitting their jobs and becoming housewives. For these young women, the “end times” has a double-meaning, meaning both the end of their youth with marriage as well as the actual end of the world, according to Islam. My dissertation captures an incredibly charged and ambivalent moment in the lives of these young women, in which they must straddle two conflicting ethical worlds: their lives before and after marriage.

Amidst the humanitarian, political, and economic destruction of Syria’s civil war, the informal money transfer system known as hawala has sustained life across the country’s fragmented territory, facilitating remittance transfers by refugees, aid operations of humanitarian NGOs, and trade and smuggling activities. “Brokering Order” examines how hawala has come to persist and flourish as a reliable and resilient mode of informal exchange in the uncertain terrain of wartime Syria. Drawing on eighteen months of multi-sited fieldwork in Lebanon and Turkey, including ethnographic research, interviews and a field experiment, the project unpacks the puzzling stability of hawala in the face of war and forced migration, and the broader effects of these economic activities on social and political order. Specifically, I trace the formation and maintenance of trust relations in hawala networks, which typically rest on shared religious, sectarian, and local affiliation; pious identity as the basis of market reputation; and a moral economy of favors, generosity, and risk-taking. These processes of network formation in turn allow brokers to solve an array of organizational, financial, and logistical challenges presented by the conflict. My findings reveal not only how brokers navigate the challenges of conflict, but also how, in doing so, they effectively broker a broader sense of order and stability for those who have endured the hardships of war and exile.

Judah Isseroff, Religion, “Choosing Chosenness: Secularized Theology in the Jewish Politics of Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss”
Hannah Arendt’s reception as a Jewish thinker has largely located her as an unusual modern Jewish thinker. Unlike so many of her German Jewish contemporaries, she did not consider modern Jewish questions in terms of a theological-political predicament. Instead, she seemed inordinately attentive to strictly political questions: rights, coexistence, and pluralistic democracy. “Ground Up Theology in the Jewish Thought of Hannah Arendt” challenges this reception. It investigates how Arendt’s regard for her own Jewish identity forms the ground of her more mature political reflections. Arendt’s basic question is: how does one appropriately relate to the given conditions of human life? She first encounters this question under threat from antisemitism, but her answers about Jewishness and the human condition in ways that go well beyond a strictly defensive posture. The chapters cover Arendt’s Jewish biography from her earliest work to her controversial report on the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Israel. The project then moves to consider her more mature, ostensibly non-Jewish work, in light of this Jewish context. In the end, this dissertation sketches a path for Jewish thought less enamored of irreconcilable predicaments and more attentive to life and experience as potential sources of modern theology.

My dissertation traces the movement of wealth in a population of elites over time using a novel dataset of the members of Dallas high society from 1890–1960. It consists of three linked papers. The first takes a theoretical and empirical look at “new money,” a modal and empirically under-examined concept in work on elites. The second brings women and marriage to the center of a conversation historically focused on individual men by examining the relationship between young elite women’s bodily capital and the material wealth of their families and future families. The third brings women and marriage to the center of a conversation historically focused on individual men by examining the relationship between young elite women’s bodily capital and the material wealth of their families and future families.

Kristine Wright, Religion, “Blessing the Mothers of Israel: Textual Circulation and the Creation of Social Bodies” (Fall semester only)
CSR during the time of COVID-19

YEAR INTERRUPTED

This year I wasn’t in any of the seminars owing to my precepting duties. Being quarantined in Princeton without the presence of the Center’s community was an eye-opener. My productivity and joy haven’t been what they normally have been without these communities.

Michael Thate, Faith and Work Initiative Fellow

I was supposed to present the paper I submitted for the CSR workshop at the ACLA conference, but it was unfortunately canceled.

Chloé Vettier, Department of French and Italian, Religion and Culture Fellow

Even more striking to me than this fantastic scholarly community, though, are the empathetic, personal connections we built week by week under Jenny’s leadership. In the midst of a global crisis, the CSR community has shown up for me personally in ways that feel affirming and truly supportive.

Rebecca Faulkner, Department of Religion, Religion and Culture Fellow

It was truly helpful, especially in times of crisis and emergency, to have a regular meeting fully devoted to intellectual exchange and discussion.

Chiara Benetollo, Department of Comparative Literature, Religion and Culture Fellow

Meeting via Zoom was challenging after COVID-19 struck—like most people, I prefer to meet in person—but it was great to see everyone’s faces once a week and the discussions were still interesting and helpful.

Shay O’Brien, Department of Sociology, Religion and Public Life Fellow

The Religion and Culture workshop was my first opportunity to examine issues of religion within society and ritual with scholars outside of the East Asia region, and it was a welcoming and rigorous space in which to do so. My fellow participants rose to the challenge of switching midstream to a remote format to give invaluable feedback about broader conceptual discussions with which my work can and should engage.

Megan Gilbert, Department of East Asian Studies, Religion and Culture Fellow
ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

PAGE: 16

UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS

The Center annually assists undergraduates by funding their junior and senior independent research. The Center also works to include undergraduates in its many areas of ongoing research. The following students were named Undergraduate Research Fellows for the past academic year.

**Talia Anisfeld ’20**, Anthropology, "In the End, We’re Neither Here nor There. And yet, We’re Almost There: Ethiopian Jewish Israelis”
Ethiopian Jews make up a small but significant portion of the Israeli population. Their arrival in the State of Israel, primarily between the 1980s and the early 2000s, was seen as the fulfillment of an ancient longing. Yet the promise of this return has been complicated and compromised by the persistent realities of discrimination, violence, and racism that they have faced—and continue to face—as they negotiate their place in contemporary Israeli society. This thesis is based on ethnographic work that I conducted in the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel in the summer and winter of 2019-2020, in the wake of the police killing of 18-year-old Solomon Teka and explores the paradoxes of identity and belonging with which Ethiopian Jews in Israel wrestle today. I examine various implications of the stories and perspectives I heard from my interlocutors: for their evolving relationship to Zionism and Israeli-ness; for the possibilities of political solidarity across racial, religious, and national boundaries; and for the construct of community. In these explorations, I center Ethiopian Jews’ embodiments of disidentification: the creative, flexible, and ambivalent ways in which they simultaneously act on, with, and against various codified narratives of belonging. I try to illuminate the ways in which this process can allow narratives to become sites of expansion rather than erasure: the ways in which stories can become spaces of great potential—spaces that, if broken open through the work of deep listening, can hold and reflect the contradictions and rough edges of lived experience, and make room for new realities to emerge.

**Emma Coley ’20**, Religion, "Open Your Hearts and Your Buildings: Occupation, Urban Theology, and Faithful Responses to Portland’s Village Movement”
To talk about religion in Portland is to talk about land. An often-cited fact among Portland’s long-term residents is that 110 new people move into Portland each day. With this rapid growth comes rapid displacement, as reflected in the 20% increase in the number of people sleeping in places deemed “unfit for human habitation” from 2017 to 2019. In a context in which houses on older, large lots are rapidly torn down and three-townhouses built in their place, land is a rare and valuable commodity. This has led some socially-minded churches to either sell or adapt the green spaces adjacent to their church buildings, spaces that were acquired and maintained in the expectation of church growth that never came in what is now one of the most “unchurched” areas in the country. These new church land uses range from church-subsidized affordable housing complexes to the formation of semi-sanctioned homeless “villages.” Thus, to talk about religion in Portland is also to talk about the long history of the role of religious organizations in the provision of critical social services, from making parking spaces available for people sleeping in cars to formal partnerships between faith-based social service agencies and city governments. This thesis focuses on the particular social, architectural, and legal formations of “village” communities in Portland as a response both to the acute city-wide housing crisis declared in 2015 as well as the more durable conditions of economic inequality across the United States. By examining the village, we can follow a complex history of protest and community formation among unhoused people, a history whose influences in Portland span from the London squatters’ rights movement, to Occupy Wall Street, to the Catholic Worker Movement. These self-governed communities, located in tents or ‘tiny houses’ on public and private property throughout the city, present a radically different response to homelessness than traditional shelters or transitional housing programs that have their roots in the religiously-motivated reform movements of the Progressive era. By contextualizing the village movement within this larger political context and highlighting their relationship to local faith communities, I argue that villages serve as a model for enacting subsidiarity (a core principle of Christian ethics espoused by “compassionate conservatives” and the “religious left” alike) that advances a successful critique of actually-existing urban neoliberalisms.

This thesis explores the ideas with which thinkers, readers, and listeners grappled during the early decades of independence throughout the Arab world, focusing on the ideas that were borne out through artistic endeavors. The first chapter will explore the performance method of tarab as an avenue for negotiating new societal ideas between the performer and audience, focusing on Umm Kulthum and her performance of her song Hadith al-Ruh as a case study. The second chapter will examine the writings of several visual artists across the Arab world who offered a holistic vision of their ideal society, and the role art and artists would play in it, in the early years of independence in their countries. The final chapter will seek to put these ideas in conversation with the more mainstream intellectual historiography of this time period, particularly focusing on the works of Sadiq Jalal al-Azm as an interlocutor.
Richard Furchtgott ’20, French and Italian, “The Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Today’s Reconstruction through the Lens of Early Nineteenth Century Renovations”

Nathaniel Gadiano ’20, French and Italian, “Francis Clarified: A Reading of Bonaventure’s Legend Maior in the Light of Clare of Assisi”
This thesis analyzes the interior life of St. Francis of Assisi. Basing its analysis of Francis on Bonaventure’s biography of the saint, it takes Clare of Assisi’s life in the cloisters as a hermeneutical guide to Francis’s life in the world. Ultimately, the goal of the thesis is to clarify Francis—that is, to show that Francis may be seen as another Clare. In order to achieve this end, the thesis draws from Clare’s personal letters to Saint Agnes of Prague, in which a rich and dynamic vision of cloistered life is depicted from Clare’s perspective. This approach to the study of Francis and Clare is a reversal of what is more common in both scholarly and popular writings on these saints; for while it is commonplace to understand Clare in reference to Francis, this thesis seeks to understand Francis in reference to Clare. In the end, it argues that just as the cloister of Clare became an outward sign that invites those in the world to enter into the mystery of God’s love, so too did Francis’ stigmatized body become a sign that points those in the world to the glory of the eschaton, in which the blessed will enjoy union with their loving Creator.

Manuel Gomez Castaño ’20, Politics, “The True Politician: Miraísm’s Hope and Virtue Politics”
The central question of this thesis is, who is the True Politician? The core objective of the thesis is to propose a redefining and reimagining of the political profession by placing unique focus on the individual who is supposed to carry this vocation out. Political success, broadly understood, derives from the success of politicians: It is human-centered. As such, the objective is to create a stable moral foundation that politicians and, therefore, political action can safely lean on. This thesis creates a theory—Virtue Politics—to increase the probability of success in transitioning from political thought to political action. In highlighting two central, problematic observations, the thesis finds its motivation to propose a suitable alternative. The first observation is of empirical nature and reveals the prevalence of corruption in government worldwide as well as statistics on the pervasiveness of global human suffering. The second observation is of qualitative nature and uncovers an underlying pessimism cynicism concerning the prospect of politicians behaving differently. These two come to form a self-nurturing, destructive, and vicious cycle. Thus, the core aim of the thesis is to identify the elemental philosophical underpinnings that may have led to this, how to address it, and ultimately, how to break it. The thesis concludes with identifying the virtues that comprise the heart of the True Politician: Generous Humanitarianism, Material Indifference, Leadership Fortitude, Resource Ingenuity, Visceral Empathy, Altruism, and Self-Governance. Lastly, it argues that though these are the necessary foundations of their character, the most important element that motivates these into action is love. The central assertion herein is that sustainable political success arises from a genuine love for others and axiomatic virtue in possession and action.

Matthew Igoe ’20, Religion, “The Mystical Theology of St. Teresa of Avila”

Rafi Lehman ’20, History, “Urban Engravings: Space, Place, and Catastrophe in Twentieth-Century Jewish Vilna”
This thesis explores the Jewish community of Vilna’s evolving relationship with space and place through the interwar period, World War II, and the immediate postwar period. Using memoirs, diaries, community almanacs, maps, poetry, and visual art, I examine how the experience of catastrophe transformed Jewish Vilna’s cultural and physical landscapes. In particular, I focus on the role of ruins and memory in fabricating a distinct Jewish Vilner identity. I show how, in the absence of political control or material resources, Jewish Vilners of the interwar period asserted their rootedness in the city alongside and against increasingly exclusive Polish nationalist claims to the region. Then, I show how the catastrophe of the Nazi occupation transformed Jewish urban and exurban spaces into instruments of both survival and violence, conservation and destruction. In my final chapter, I analyze survivors’ accounts of their return to the ruined city after the war, emphasizing their reliance on the city’s material remains as they began to process their compounded losses. In conclusion, I examine Jewish Vilna’s postwar memorial books, suggesting a continuity between these memorialization projects and earlier Jewish interventions in the city.

Emily McLean ’20, Religion, “Native and Mormon Religious Practices Informing Land Politics”

Elyana Schaefer ’20, Sociology, “Religion and Spirituality at Princeton University: How Young Adults Develop their Religious and Spiritual Identities in College”
In this study, I investigate how the institutional, social, and academic environment at Princeton University shape students’ religious identity and beliefs during their undergraduate education. In semi-structured interviews with seventeen 3rd and 4th year undergraduate students at Princeton University, I ask students questions about their religious background before coming to Princeton University and how the experiences with the Princeton community influenced their beliefs and religious identity. Although an institution-specific study, the interviews provide insight into the aspects of religion and spirituality that young adults are drawn to in the 21st century, such as a sense of community, seeing other people leading a life of example, structure, shared traditions, music, and a life imbued with purpose. The interviews also offered several accounts of positive experiences for students who came to university with a negative attitude towards religion and, through contact with students of faith, gained a deeper appreciation for religious devotion and, in response, re-evaluated their own religious and spiritual identity.

Amelia Stucke ’20, History, “Religious Leaders in Modern America and Their Use of Miracles”
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Center is administered by an interdepartmental faculty committee appointed to rotating terms by the Dean of the Faculty. The committee sets policy for the Center and serves as the review and selection committee for all applications to the Center, including those for its conferences and lecture series, graduate student fellows, and undergraduate seminars.

Ellen Chances is Professor of Russian literature in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. Her scholarly and teaching interests range from studies on individual authors such as Andrei Bitov, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, and Kharms, to broad interdisciplinary explorations of the psychology of culture, and the interplay between literature and the other arts. Her specialties are the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first-century Russian novel; Soviet and post-Soviet Russian literature and culture; the study of literature in its historical context; literature and ideas; literature and art; literature and values; and literature and film. In addition to writing fiction, memoirs, essays, and poetry, she is the author most recently of Andrei Bitov: The Ecology of Inspiration.

Patricia Fernández-Kelly is Professor in the Department of Sociology and Research Associate in the Office of Population Research. She is also the director of the Center for Migration and Development. Fernández-Kelly is a social anthropologist with an interest in international economic development, gender, class and ethnicity, and urban ethnography. Her latest book is The Hero’s Fight: African Americans in West Baltimore and the Shadow of the State and she is currently working on a book entitled Haleah Dreams: The Making of the Cuban-American Working Class in South Florida.

Seth Perry is Assistant Professor of Religion. He is interested in American religious history, with a particular focus on print culture and religious authority. Perry’s first book, Bible Culture and Authority in the Early United States (Princeton University Press, 2018) explores the performative, rhetorical, and material aspects of bible-based authority in early-national America. His current book project is a biography of Lorenzo Dow, the early-national period’s most famous itinerant preacher.

Jack Tannous is Associate Professor of History. He is interested in the cultural history of the eastern Mediterranean, especially the Middle East, in the Late Antique and early medieval period. His research focuses on the Syriac-speaking Christian communities of the Near East in this period, but he is interested in several other related areas, including Eastern Christian Studies more broadly, Patristics/early Christian studies, Greco-Syriac and Greco-Arabic translation, Christian-Muslim interactions, sectarianism and identity, early Islamic history, the history of the Arabic Bible, and the Quran. He is also interested in manuscripts and the editing of Syriac and Arabic (especially Christian Arabic) texts. Tannous is the author of The Making of the Medieval Middle East: Religion, Society, and Simple Believers (Princeton University Press 2018) and is currently at work on Lovers of Labor at the End of the Ancient World: Syriac Scholars Between Byzantium and Islam.

Stephen F. Teiser teaches history of religions at Princeton University, where he is D.T. Suzuki Professor in Buddhist Studies and Director of the Program in East Asian Studies. He is interested in the interaction between Buddhism and indigenous Chinese traditions, brought into focus through the wealth of sūtras, non-canonical texts, and artistic evidence unearthed on the Silk Road. With support from a Social Science Research Council fellowship, “New Directions in the Study of Prayer,” he is completing a book entitled Curing with Karma, focusing on medieval liturgical manuscripts used in Buddhist rituals for healing. His most recent work is a translation of Chunwen Hao’s Dunhuang Manuscripts: An Introduction to Texts from the Silk Road (Princeton Press, 2020).

Judith Weisenfeld is the Agate Brown and George L. Collord Professor of Religion and Associate Faculty in the Center for African American Studies. Her research and teaching focus on African American religious history, religion and race, and religion in modern American culture. She is the author of Hollywood Be Thy Name: African American Religion in American Film, 1929-1949 and African American Women and Christian Activism: New York’s Black YWCA, 1905-1945. Her most recent book, New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration, was awarded the 2017 Albert J. Raboteau Prize for the Best Book in Africana Religions. Her current research examines the intersections of psychiatry, race, and African American religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Jenny Wiley Legath is Associate Director of the Center and served as Acting Director in 2019-2020. She specializes in American religious history, focusing on gender from the nineteenth century to the present. Her first book Sanctified Sisters: A History of Protestant Deaconesses was released by New York University Press in 2019. Her new project addresses carrying firearms as religious practice. She sits with the Committee as a non-voting member.
Faculty Associates are members of the University faculty who have expressed particular interest in CSR activities and who help advise Center staff about relevant endeavors in their respective departments. Complete descriptions of their publications and research and teaching interests are available from the Center’s website for students interested in knowing more about faculty resources in the study of religion.

Christopher Achen is Roger Williams Straus Professor of Social Sciences and Professor of Politics. His research interest is Political Methodology, particularly in its application to empirical democratic theory, American Politics, and International Relations.

Leora F. Batnitzky is Professor of Religion. Her teaching and research interests include philosophy of religion, modern Jewish thought, hermeneutics, and contemporary legal and political theory.

Aisha Beliso-de Jesús is Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and American Studies. She is a cultural and social anthropologist who has conducted ethnographic research with Santería practitioners in Cuba and the United States, and police officers and Black and Brown communities affected by police violence in the United States.

André Benhaïm is Associate Professor of French. He studies twentieth-century French and Francophone literature and culture, with particular interest in questions of identity and representation, ethics and aesthetics, and the relationship among “canonical” literature, contemporary works, and “popular culture.”

Wallace Best is Professor of Religion and African American Studies. He specializes in 19th and 20th century African American religious history, focusing on the areas of African American religion, religion and literature, Pentecostalism, and Womanist theology.

John Borneman is Professor of Anthropology. With regard to religious studies, he explores the displacement of the sacred in and through secular processes.

D. Graham Burnett is Professor of History. His interests include the history of natural history and the sciences of the earth and the sea from the 17th through the 20th centuries.

Michael Cadden is Senior Lecturer in Theater, and Chair, in the Peter B. Lewis Center for the Creative and Performing Arts. His areas of interest include modern and contemporary theater, Shakespeare in performance, and Australian literature and theater.

Michael Cook is Class of 1943 University Professor of Near Eastern Studies. His focus is the formation of Islamic civilization and the role played by religious values in that process.

Rafaela Dancygier is Assistant Professor of Politics and Public and International Affairs. She researches the domestic consequences of international immigration, the incorporation of immigrants, the political representation of ethnic minorities, and the determinants of ethnic conflict.

Mitchell Duneier is Maurice P. During Professor of Sociology. He is the author most recently of Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea.

Eddie S. Glaude Jr. is William S. Tod Professor of Religion and African American Studies. His research interests include American pragmatism and African American religious history and its place in American public life.

Anthony Grafton is Henry Putnam University Professor of History. His interests lie in the cultural history of Renaissance Europe, the history of books and readers, the history of scholarship and education in the West from Antiquity to the 19th century, and the history of science from Antiquity to the Renaissance.

Eric Gregory is Professor of Religion. His interests include religious and philosophical ethics, theology, bioethics, political theory, and the role of religion in public life.

Jonathan Gribetz is Assistant Professor in Near Eastern Studies and the Program in Judaic Studies. He researches the history of Zionism, Palestine, Israel, Jerusalem, and the Arab-Jewish encounter.

Olga P. Hasty is Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures. She devotes herself primarily to poets of the nineteenth century and the modernist period (e.g. Pushkin, Pavlova, Pasternak, and Tsvetaeva).

Amaney Jamal is the Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics. Her areas of specialization are the Middle East and North Africa, mass and political behavior, political development and democratization, inequality and economic segregation, Muslim immigration (US and Europe), gender, race, religion, and class.

Michael Jennings is Class of 1900 Professor of Modern Languages and Chair of the Department of German. His research and teaching focus on 20th century European literature, photography, and cultural theory.

Beatrice Kitzinger is Assistant Professor of Art and Archaeology. Her research examines intersections of artistic media, of pictorial and liturgical space, and of historical, eschatological, and ritual time primarily in manuscript illumination between the eighth and tenth centuries.

Eve Krakowski is Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies and the Program in Judaic Studies. She focuses on the social history of the medieval Middle East, with particular interests in women’s history, family history, and the history of religious practice.
Christina Lee is a tenured research scholar in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Her current research examines Hispanic-Asian forms of religious devotions in the Spanish Philippines during the early colonial period.

Hendrik Lorenz is Professor of Philosophy. His research centers on Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and Plotinus, focusing on issues in (moral) psychology and epistemology.

Carolina Mangone is Assistant Professor of Art and Archaeology. She specializes in southern Renaissance and Baroque art and is currently researching Gianlorenzo Bernini, the “Michelangelo of his age.”

Meredith Martin is Associate Professor of English. She specializes in anglophone poetry from 1830 to the present, with particular interests in historical poetics, poetry and public culture, and disciplinary and pedagogical history.

Jan-Werner Müller is Professor of Politics. His research interests include the history of modern political thought, liberalism and its critics, constitutionalism, religion and politics, and the normative dimensions of European integration.

Chika Okeke-Agulu is Associate Professor of Art and Archaeology and African American Studies. He specializes in African and African Diaspora art and visual cultures, with a particular interest in the history of modernism in Africa and the intersection of art and politics in modern and contemporary art.

Elaine Pagels is the Harrington Spear Paine Foundation Professor of Religion. She has published widely on Gnosticism and early Christianity and continues to pursue research interests in late antiquity.

Sara S. Poor is Associate Professor of German. Her primary research interests are in the areas of Gender Studies and medieval German literature.

Jamie Reuland is Assistant Professor of Music. Her work focuses on music of the later Middle Ages, song, language, and philosophies of music.

Sarah Rivett is Assistant Professor of English. She specializes in early American and transatlantic literature and culture.

Carolyn Rouse is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Program in African Studies. She is a cultural anthropologist who focuses on how evidence and authority are used to validate truth claims and calls for social justice.

Marina Rustow is Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East. She is a social historian of the medieval Middle East who works primarily with sources from the Cairo Geniza.

Esther H. Schor is a poet and professor of English and founding Chair of the Committee on American Jewish Studies. Her teaching interests include British Romanticism and literature, Scripture, and religion.

Teresa Shawcross is Associate Professor of History. She is a historian of the Byzantine Empire and the Mediterranean World in the Middle Ages who is currently studying medieval theories and practices of empire.

Nigel Smith is William and Annie S. Paton Foundation Professor of Ancient and Modern Literature. His interests include poetry; poetic theory; the social role of literature; and literature, politics and religion.

Moulie Vidas is Assistant Professor of Religion and the Program in Judaic Studies. His current projects include a monograph on the emergence of Talmudic culture in Roman Palestine and a co-edited collection of essays on late ancient knowledge.

Barbara White is Professor of Music and Director of Composers’ Ensemble. She is a chamber music composer whose scholarly writings address the coordination between sound and image, the relationship between creative activity and everyday life, and the impact on music of gender, listening, and spirituality.

Tamsen Wolff is Associate Professor of English. She specializes in modern and contemporary drama and performance, gender studies, cultural studies, voice, directing, and dramaturgy.

Muhammad Qasim Zaman is Robert H. Niehaus ’77 Professor of Near Eastern Studies and Religion. His research interests include religious authority in classical, medieval, and modern Islam; history of Islamic law in the Middle East and in late medieval and modern South Asia; learning in Islam; Islamic political thought; and contemporary religious and political movements in the Muslim world.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Courtney Bender *’97
Lynn Davidman
Henry C. Doll ’58
Jenna Weissman Joselit
D. Michael Lindsay *’06
Katherine Marshall *’69
A. G. Miller *’94

CENTER STAFF

Acting Director: Jenny Wiley Legath
Manager: Anita S. Kline
The CSR Religion and Culture seminar was probably the best academic seminar I’ve taken part in (at Princeton or elsewhere). Every participant took it seriously and brought both a depth of knowledge and a great curiosity to every paper, no matter how far afield from their own area of research. My conception of what constitutes “religion” as an object of study (historically as well as theoretically, in literature and art, and so on) was greatly expanded and nuanced.

Joshua Bauchner, Department of History, Religion and Culture Fellow

The time and care people devoted to read each other’s work (that was often very outside of their wheelhouse) was inspiring, and I learned a lot about how to be a generous colleague.

Thalia Gigerenzer, Department of Anthropology, Religion and Public Life Fellow

CSR community was like an anchor for my last year in graduate school.

Yuanxin Chen, Department of East Asian Studies, Religion and Culture Fellow

I have had few opportunities in my department (Politics) to speak with other scholars studying religion, and I have been exposed to so much important literature that has shaped the trajectory of my dissertation. Feedback on my work has also helped me bring it to the next level and improve it to the point where it could be published, as one of the pieces I workshoped has just been accepted for publication at the *Journal of Comparative Politics*. Harris Doshay, Department of Politics, Religion and Public Life Fellow

The best part of being an RPL fellow involved meeting scholars from different disciplines. I initially eyed them warily, but grew to trust and value their feedback and questions.

Judah Isseroff, Department of Religion, Religion and Public Life Fellow

The CSR Religion and Culture seminar was probably the best academic seminar I’ve taken part in (at Princeton or elsewhere). Every participant took it seriously and brought both a depth of knowledge and a great curiosity to every paper, no matter how far afield from their own area of research. My conception of what constitutes “religion” as an object of study (historically as well as theoretically, in literature and art, and so on) was greatly expanded and nuanced.

Joshua Bauchner, Department of History, Religion and Culture Fellow
Throughout the year, the Center sponsored many public lectures, discussions and symposia. These well-attended events attracted the interest of students, faculty, and the wider Princeton community. Video or audio recordings of many events are available online from the Center’s website, and a podcast subscription will become available soon. In addition to financial support from Princeton University, the Center’s public events are funded through a variety of sources. Full sponsorship information is available on our website.

### BUDDHIST STUDIES WORKSHOP

**September 24, 2019**  
Mindfulness Under (Re)Construction: Contemporary Mindfulness Practices, Buddhist Transmission, and “Not So Secular” Psychotherapy  
Lounge Seminar with Ira Helderman, Vanderbilt University and private practice psychotherapist

**October 8, 2019**  
The End of the Dharma in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: On the “Image of the Extinction of the Dharma” at the Dazhusheng Cave of Baoshan (Henan)  
Buddhist Studies Workshop with Yi Liu, Capital Normal University

**November 19, 2019**  
Formats of the Book in East Asia and Environs: A Workshop of the Book and the Silk Roads Project.  
One-day workshop examining rare books in Firestone Library, presenting research, and planning future collaborations

**February 17, 2020**  
Buddhism and Free Will  
Lounge Seminar with Katie Javanaud, Visiting Lecturer and Researcher, Princeton University

**March 2, 2020**  
The Old Man and the Sea: Shinra Myōjin and Buddhist Networks of the East Asian “Mediterranean”  
Buddhist Studies Workshop Lecture by Sujung Kim, DePauw University
CROSSROADS OF RELIGION AND POLITICS

October 10, 2019  The Rise of America’s New Religious Left  Discussion with Jack Jenkins, journalist and national reporter, Religion News Service

December 5, 2019  Working-Class Men and their Changing Attachments to Work, Family and Religion  Discussion with Kathryn Edin, William Church Osborn Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs and Timothy Nelson, Lecturer in Sociology and Public Affairs

DOLL LECTURE ON RELIGION AND MONEY

November 6, 2019  Spirits of Capitalism: Questions of Method in the Analysis of Religion and the Economy  Lecture by Daromir Rudnyckyj, University of Victoria
MUSEUM EXHIBITION

The Eternal Feast: Banqueting in Chinese Art from the 10th to the 14th Century

Exhibit at the Princeton University Art Museum

October 19, 2019 - February 16, 2020

Film Screening: FATHER’S KINGDOM
Wednesday, September 18, 6:00 pm
Frist Film Theatre (Room 301)

He changed the course of not only the family, but the world... a man of music and the name.

SAY AMEN, SOMEBODY
BY GEORGE T. NIERENBERG

NEWLY RESTORED BY MILESTONE FILMS

Case in point: America’s first feature-length documentary, Say Amen, Somebody, is a joyous, funny, deeply emotional celebration of African American culture, featuring the father of Gospel, Thomas A. Dorsey (“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”); its matron, Mother Willie Mae Ford Smith; and earth-shaking performances by the Barrett Sisters and the O’Neal Twins.

DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW WITH:
ANTHEA D. BUTLER
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

AMBRE DROMGOOLE
YALE UNIVERSITY

LERONE MARTIN
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

JUDITH WEISENFIELD
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 20, 2020
6:00 PM
MCCORMICK 101

Space, Time and Religion in Early America Conference
February 6-8, 2020

Space, Time and Religion

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
REVISING EXODUS!

Twenty years after the publication of his foundational first book, Dr. Glaude reflects on the intellectual currents shaping the book and how they have informed his subsequent scholarly work and his public interventions.

Eddie S. Glaude, Jr.
James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of African American Studies

February 6, 2020
4:30 PM
Lewis Library 120

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW
### CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Organizer(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 14, 2019</td>
<td>‘The Reformacion of Holy Chirche’: The Logic of Vernacular Textual Proliferation, 1375-1415</td>
<td>Lecture by Nicholas Watson, Harvard University, Organized by Jordan Skinner and Andrew Finn, English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OTHER EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Organizer(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 18, 2019</td>
<td>“Father’s Kingdom” Film Screening and Discussion</td>
<td>Discussion with Lenny Feinberg, Director, and Judith Weisenfeld, featured scholar, Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 17, 2019</td>
<td>Writing Religion Online: Making Scholarship Public</td>
<td>Workshop with journalist and editor Kali Handelman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 17, 2019</td>
<td>Sanctified Sisters: A History of Protestant Deaconesses</td>
<td>Book Discussion with author Jenny Wiley Legath and respondent Kali Handelman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6-7, 2020</td>
<td>Space, Time and Religion in Early America Conference</td>
<td>Organizer by Seth Perry, Religion, Keynote lecture by Eddie Glaude, African American Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 20, 2020</td>
<td>“Say Amen, Somebody” Film Screening and Discussion</td>
<td>Organized by Judith Weisenfeld, Religion, Discussion with Anthea Butler, University of Pennsylvania, Ambre Dromgoole, Yale University, and Lerone Martin, Washington University in St. Louis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ALUMNI PUBLICATIONS

Following is a partial list of books and articles published during the past year or forthcoming by current and past graduate students, visiting fellows, and scholars affiliated with or supported by the Center. All cover images are copyrighted by their respective publishing houses.

Books


Journal Articles, Book Chapters, and Digital Works


Mussleman, Cody. “Training for the ‘Unknown and Unknowable’: CrossFit and Evangelical Temporality” Religions 2019 10(11), 624; https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10110624


Springs, Jason A. “Healthy Conflict in an Era of Intractability: Reply to Four Critical Reponses (from Rosemary Kellison,


Ryan Darr is an ethicist whose research and teaching draws from philosophy, theology, and intellectual history. He is currently completing a manuscript on the theological origins of utilitarian moral philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He is also working on a second project that addresses the complications posed to individual moral agency and responsibility by moral problems that are structural in nature, especially climate change. His articles can be found in Environmental Ethics, Studies in Christian Ethics, Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics, and Journal of Religious Ethics. He holds a Master’s in Theology from the University of Notre Dame and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Yale University.

Alexander Englert joins the Princeton community as a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Philosophy of Religion after earning his Ph.D. in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University. He investigates the intersection of natural philosophy, ethics, and metaphysics in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and the German Idealist tradition. Currently, he is studying this intersection through Kant’s Opus postumum, as well as in relation to Kant’s argument for the immortality of the soul and the highest good. He has been published in Hegel Bulletin, Hegel-Studien, and Kantian Review.

Elizabeth Li’s research engages perspectives from philosophy, theology, religion, and the history of ideas with particular focus on nineteenth century thought and Søren Kierkegaard. She is interested in questions related to the relationship between philosophy, religion, and theology, and the ethical and epistemological value of ambiguity and difficulty. Elizabeth holds a BA in Philosophy & Science Studies from Roskilde University, an MSt in Literature and Arts and an MPhil in Modern Theology from the University of Oxford, where she is completing her DPhil in Theology. She has published in journals such as the Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook and International Journal of Philosophy and Theology.

Eziaku Nwococha is a scholar of Africana religions with expertise in the ethnographic study of Vodou in Haiti and the Haitian diaspora, with research grounded in thorough understanding of religions in Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States, in gender and sexuality studies, visual and material culture and Africana Studies generally. Nwokocha holds a Ph.D. with distinction in Africana studies from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master’s degree in Africana studies from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master’s degree in theological studies from Harvard Divinity School, and a Bachelor’s degree in Black studies and Feminist studies from the University of California Santa Barbara. Nwokocha was a 2015 Ford Predoctoral Fellow during her PhD and Ronald E McNair Scholar as an undergraduate. Her current project, “Vodou en Vogue: Fashioning Black Divinities in Haiti and the Haitian Diaspora” is under exclusive review with UNC press. Nwokocha has been featured in the Journal of Haitian Studies and the Harvard Divinity Bulletin Magazine.

UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS

Spring 2020 Funding was limited by coronavirus-related travel restrictions. Additional Undergraduate Fellows will be selected in Fall 2020.

Ethan Kahn ’21, Near Eastern Studies, “Reparations for Iraqi Jews Displaced in the Mid-Twentieth Century”

Grace Logan ’21, Anthropology, “New Age Spiritualism on YouTube: Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic from an Online Community”
GRADUATE FELLOWS

Religion and Culture


**Stephanie Fan**, Comparative Literature, “Pleasure as a First Principle? Nietzsche and the French Moralists on Morality and Religion”


**David Gyllenhaal**, History, “Ambulance-Chasing: A New Method for Writing the Cultural and Intellectual History of the Seventh and Eighth-Century Mediterranean”

**Madeline McMahon**, History, “Shepherd ing a Church in Crisis: Religious Life, Governance, and Knowledge in Early Modern Italy”

**Molly O’Brien**, French and Italian, “A Geography of Memory: Exile and Return in the Works of the Contemporary French Jewish Women Writers Hélène Cixous, Colette Fel lous, and Éliette Abécassis”

**David Salkowski**, Music, “Music for an Imagined Liturgy: Music and Orthodoxy in Late Imperial Russia”


**Richard Spiegel**, History of Science and Humanities, “History in Mind: Neo-Humanism and the Politics of the Historician’s Psy che, 1830-1890”

**Spencer Weinreich**, History of Science, “Being Alone Together: A History of Solitary Confinement”

Religion and Public Life

**Chiara Benetollo**, Comparative Literature, “The Language of Reproduction Literature, Politics, and Public Health in the Soviet Union and Italy”

**Megan Brand**, Politics, “Strategic Origins of Admissible Refug ees in International Law”

**Ipsita Dey**, Anthropology, “Sacred Ecology and the Self: Religion and Identity Among Fijian Indian Hindus”

**Rebecca Faulkner**, Religion, “Muhammad Iqbal and the Meanings of South Asian Islamic Modernism”

**Thalia Gigenerenzer**, Anthropology, “Coming of Age in the End Times: An Ethnography of Muslim Women in Delhi, India”


**Peter Kitlas**, Near Eastern Studies, “To the divinely guided: Crafting Islamic diplomacies in the early modern Mediterranean”

**Carrie Seigler**, Sociology, “The Impact of Sexual Violence on Religious and Spiritual Identity”


**William Stell**, Religion, “Gay Evangelical Activism and the Construction of Antigay Christianity”

**Julian Weideman**, History, “Islamic Reform on the Margins of Colonialism: Re-making the Zaytuna Mosque in the 20th Century”

EVENTS

At the time of this Annual Report, event planning is paused because of coronavirus concerns. Please check the Center’s website for ongoing updates. We still hope to offer a robust schedule of events, including our Crossroads of Religion and Politics Series, our Doll Lecture on Religion and Money. We will also initiate a new series on “Religion and the Public Conversation” with both public-facing events and trainings for students and faculty to develop a “toolkit” of skills for sharing their religious studies knowledge with the community.
Departmental Colleges and Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Religion-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sociology-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. History-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Near Eastern Studies-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Politics-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Anthropology-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. English-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. East Asian Studies-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Architecture-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Art and Archaeology-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Comparative Literature-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. French and Italian-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Classics-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Spanish and Portuguese-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Music-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. German-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Departments represented by Graduate Student Fellows

1999-2020

- Sociology-66
- History-56
- Near Eastern Studies-23
- Politics-19
- Anthropology-18
- English-17
- East Asian Studies-10
- Architecture-7
- Art and Archaeology-7
- Comparative Literature-6
- French and Italian-6
- Classics-3
- Spanish and Portuguese-3
- Music-2
- German-1

2019-2020 CSR Award Winners

- Executive Committee member Judith Weisenfeld won the Graduate Mentoring Award from the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning.
- Undergraduate Fellow Emma Coley ’20 was named co-winner of the Pyne Prize, the highest distinction Princeton confers on an Undergraduate.
- Graduate alumni Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada and Leslie Ribovich were selected for the 2020-2022 Young Scholars in American Religion program.
- Center Manager Anita S. Kline won the Princeton Writes Essay Contest.
- Past Visiting Fellow Susan B. Ridgely was awarded a Louisville Project Grant for a new project entitled, “Accidental Pioneers: The Generational Effects of Desegregating the Raleigh Diocese.”