



DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
NEWSLETTER
2013-14/FALL 2013/VOLUME 14

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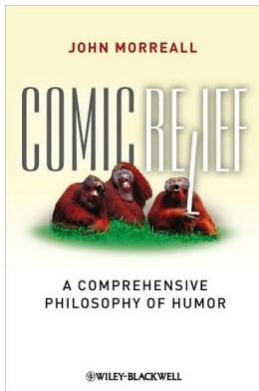
Greetings from the Chair

For the 2012-13 academic year, I was on leave writing two books, and Prof. Marc Lee Raphael was gracious enough to fill in for me as chair. I don't have much first-hand knowledge of what went on in the Wren, but it was a busy year. Dr. Anne Blazer joined our department as an Assistant Professor specializing in American religions. She is developing some promising new courses, including one on religion and sports. Dr. Alex Angelov taught his first full year with us. He teaches courses in Christianity, including medieval Christianity, and he also taught Theory and Method in the spring. Prof. Angelov is a specialist in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, and we soon hope to have him teaching in that area. Dr. Jacob Goodson taught courses in Ethics for his fourth year with us; in the spring he got a position teaching Philosophy at Southwest College in Kansas. Taking his place this year is Samuel Free Williams, a doctoral student from the University of Virginia. While Prof. Kevin Vose was on research leave, he was replaced by Dr. Wamai Muriuki, originally from Kenya, a specialist in Japanese Buddhism.

There were several student-faculty events, including a panel discussion of the importance of Religious Studies to understanding the contemporary world, and lighter stuff, like the Faculty Bake-Off with student judges.

As state funding of the College continues to decline, we're pursuing more outside support, such as grants, endowments, and contributions from alums. If your study of religion at William & Mary was as important to you as we tried to make it, we hope that you'll think of us the next time you're feeling generous. And whenever you visit Williamsburg, of course, please stop by and see the department on the third floor of the Wren.

John Morreall
Religious Studies Department Chair



Faculty Changes

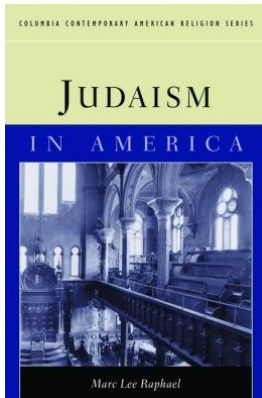
On Leave Spring 2014

Alexander Angelov
Michael Daise

Visiting Faculty, 2013-2014

Mark McLaughlin: MA, University of California, Santa Barbara; teaching Introduction to Hinduism (F'13, S'14), Hindu Sacred Texts (F'13), and a Freshman Seminar: Temples, Tombs and Topography (S'14).

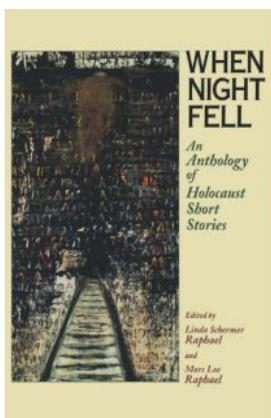
S. Free Williams: MA, Vanderbilt University; teaching Religion and Ethics (F'13, S'14), Warfare and Ethics (F'13) and a Freshman Seminar: Religion, Ethics and Film (S'14).



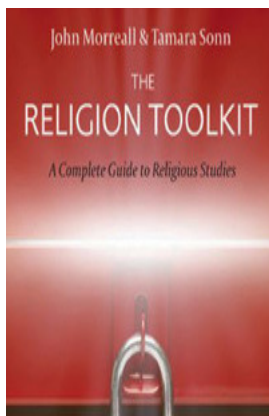
Faculty News

John Morreall: John Morreall had a research leave in 2012-13, during which he completed his book *Questions for Christians: Thinking Carefully about Basic Beliefs*. It will be published in 2014 by Rowman & Littlefield. He also finished *50 Myths about Religions*, which he had been writing with Prof. Tamara Sonn; it will be published by Wiley-Blackwell in 2014. In October he presented the second lecture in the Tack Faculty Lecture Series at the College, "What's So Funny? The Nature and Value of Humor." He also did keynote lectures on the philosophy of humor at Colby College and Arizona State University. He continued to serve on five editorial boards, including that of *The Encyclopedia of Humor Studies*, for which he wrote articles on Biblical Humor, Clergy, Taoism, Comic and Tragic Worldviews, Aesthetics, and Philosophy of Humor. At the invitation of the *British Journal of Aesthetics*, he wrote an article on "The Comic Vision of Life" for a special issue on "Tragedy and Comedy."

Marc Lee Raphael: Marc Lee Raphael finished a year as Interim Chair while the Chair, Professor Morreall, was on sabbatical, and reconnected with chairs around the campus. The highlight of his year was taking 36 W&M students to study the Holocaust in Czechoslovakia with him, and to visit numerous sights in the Czech Republic and Central Europe. During the six weeks, Central Europe experienced severe floods, as the Vltava overflowed throughout the streets of Prague. When he returns to Prague in 2014 as Program Director once again, he hopes for better weather.



Faculty Publications



Faculty News Continued

Tamara Sonn: Tamara Sonn just finished her second book co-authored with John Morreall, *50 Myths about Religions*, which will be published by Wiley-Blackwell in Spring 2014. She is also completing work on another co-authored work on Islam and democratization, to be published by Oxford University Press in 2014. Her research for this book took her to Libya, Egypt, and Turkey over the past year. As well, Professor Sonn received a grant from the U.S. Department of State to host Pakistani scholars for a series of seminars over Winter Break dealing with scholarly approaches to Religious Studies.

Sam Gardner, one of Professor Sonn's students in Islam in the Modern World, recently received top prize for papers on international topics from The Monitor for his paper entitled "Saddam Hussein and the 'Conservative Islamist Discourse.'"

Kevin Vose: Kevin Vose spent the first half of 2013 on a post-tenure sabbatical, conducting research and working on a book manuscript on early Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. His research concerns recently discovered 12th century Tibetan manuscripts that allow us access for the first time to the thought of some of Tibet's foundational religious figures. Prof. Vose's translations of some of these manuscripts form the basis for his examination of the emergence of the dominant form of Buddhist philosophy in Tibet. In July, Prof. Vose presented aspects of this research at the XIIIth Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia. Mongolia has had a centuries-long relationship with Tibet and has experienced a revival of its Buddhist traditions following the breakup of the Soviet Union. This made Ulaan Baatar an ideal place to host the world's leading Tibetan Studies organization and provided attendees terrific opportunities to explore Mongolia's development of Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

Prof. Vose returned to teaching in the fall semester, offering courses on Buddhism and Tibetan Religion. He has begun a three-year term serving as co-director of the College's Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Program, which offers majors in Middle Eastern and East Asian Studies and a minor in South Asian Studies. Prof. Vose also continues his work with Swastha Nepal, a student organization that has developed a partnership with two villages in Nepal in order to better understand and promote improvements in local health care. Prof. Vose conducted research on the interrelation of religion and wellness in these two villages with five William and Mary students in 2012; the group hopes to return there in 2014. Prof. Vose is the Walter G. Mason Associate Professor of Religious Studies for 2013-2014.

Faculty Publications

Faculty Spotlight on Annie Blazer

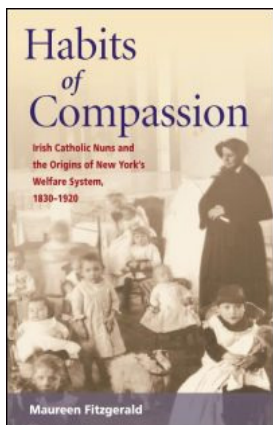
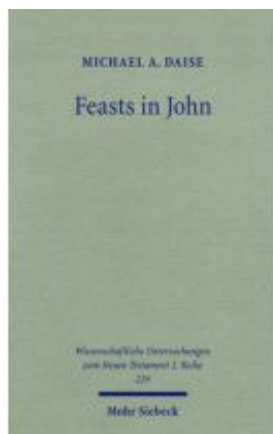
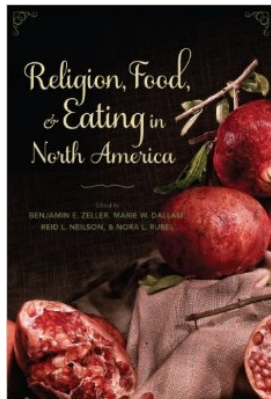
Annie Blazer joined the Religious Studies department in Fall of 2012. During her first year at the college, she taught classes on religion in America as well as a freshman seminar called “Bodybuilding and Culture.” Her classes on religion in America focus on political implications and cultural contexts for religious practices. Her freshman seminar focused on gender and gym culture in the United States and required the freshmen to analyze the campus gym. This assignment employed anthropological methods similar to Blazer's own research interests.

Prof. Blazer's first book, *Faith on the Field: Sports, Gender, and Evangelical Christianity in America*, is currently under contract with New York University Press for inclusion in their series on religion in North America. The book explores the growing population of female Christian athletes in the United States and examines how these women reconcile their sporting and religious identities. Prof. Blazer has published other work on this topic including a chapter in *The Oxford Handbook on Religion and the American News Media* that addresses media coverage of football and Christianity and an article in the journal *Religion Compass* that summarizes contemporary scholarship on religion and sports. Prof. Blazer serves as co-chair of the Religion, Sport, and Play group for the American Academy of Religion. In spring 2014, Prof. Blazer will be teaching a class on religion and sports that addresses the use of sport in multiple traditions in the US and internationally.

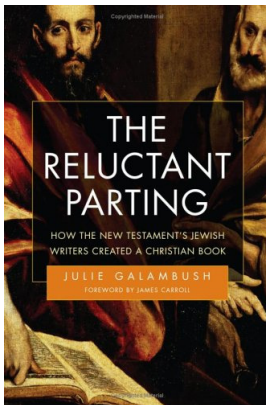
At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Baltimore in November 2013, Prof. Blazer delivered a paper that analyzed the performance of the evangelical feats of strength ministry, The Power Team. The Power Team is a group of strong men (and a few women) that travel the country demonstrating their strength (by smashing bricks, bending metal rods, tearing phone books in half, etc.) for Christian audiences. This conference paper has given Prof. Blazer the opportunity to study the theory of affect, and she will continue this study through her participation in the religion and media workshop at the annual meeting.

Prof. Blazer also has a research interest in the use of food in religious practices. She has begun fieldwork for a project that investigates evangelical Christians' use of a raw foods diet for both health and spiritual reasons. A chapter based upon this research will appear in the forthcoming book *Religion, Food, and Eating in North America* (Columbia University Press, 2014). Blazer's chapter is an anthropological investigation of the evangelical group Hallelujah Acres, an organization that promotes a predominantly raw foods diet as God's plan for human eating and human health. Prof. Blazer plans to continue investigating the relationship between religion, health, and food in the coming years. She was a member of the American Academy of Religion's seminar on religion, food, and eating from 2009 to 2012.

Prof. Blazer was a member of the 2012-2013 teaching workshop for pre-tenure religious studies faculty sponsored by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religious Studies. She met with religious studies faculty from across the country to discuss pedagogy and teaching strategies. The Wabash Center also awarded Prof. Blazer a summer research fellowship to support her work on her first book. Prof. Blazer continues to explore pedagogy and teaching through the University Teaching Project at The College of William and Mary.



Faculty Publications



Faculty Spotlight on Alexander Angelov

Alexander Angelov came to the College of William and Mary from the University of Michigan where he studied medieval Christianity, Byzantine and Balkan history as well as cultural anthropology. In addition to working on various articles, Professor Angelov is currently revising a book that examines the social and cultural dynamics of the major eastern Christian missions in the Caucasus, Africa, Arabia, and the Balkans. Following the labyrinthine paths of the Byzantine missionaries, Professor Angelov has had to find his own ways in such places as Paris, Jerusalem, the Vatican, or the monastic collections of Mt. Athos. Numerous seminars and conferences in the United States and abroad have helped him strengthen his research and relate it to critical scholarly audiences. Now at the College of William and Mary, Professor Angelov enjoys teaching his “Introduction to Christianity,” “Religion and Society in the Middle Ages,” and “Theories of Religion.” Each semester has been a wonderful gift of fascinating students whose energy and excitement have brought deeper meaning to his work and have inspired him to study and search for answers ever harder. He has also appreciated the support and collegiality of the Department of Religious Studies and the larger community at the College. Both have made him feel at home and have generously assisted his current academic sailing to Byzantium and eastern Christianity.

Religious Humor



Alumni News

Patrick Comstock '05: Patrick finished his third year as a doctoral candidate in the program in Philosophy and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He is writing a dissertation on the educational value of ‘contemplative practices’ like mindfulness and meditation.

Chris Gegenheimer '05: Chris announced his engagement to Mona Khadr.

Susan Gray (Eakin) Page '01: In 2012, Susan Gray accepted the newly created position of Digital Archives Coordinator at the Library of Virginia. Also in 2012, Susan Gray and her husband, Ron, welcomed their first child, John Harrison Page. When Susan Gray returned to work after maternity leave, she was delighted to find a new co-worker with ties to the Religious Studies Department--Ben Bromley '08.

Matthew Tobin '11: Matthew completed his M.A. in Security Studies at Georgetown University; he currently works at William & Mary's Washington D.C. Office.

Timothy Pollock '95: Tim is presenting a paper, *A Multimodal Analysis of Ozu Yasujiro's An Autumn Afternoon*, at the FilmAsia 2013 conference in a couple of weeks. He attended the conference as an observer last year in Osaka, Japan and he's really happy to be presenting this year. He is looking forward to the chance to mix with academics of other countries.

Mary “Maggie” Wunnenberg Kirsh '02: Maggie received a Life Reborn Fellowship for her research project, “Relief Agencies, Social Workers, and Constructs of Illness and Health, 1945-1950” from the Academic Subcommittee for Fellowships of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

Lectures

Thanks to the generous donations from our friends and alumni*, the department is able to sponsor lecture series and host events for our concentrators. Here are highlights from our 2012/13 schedule:

9/20/12: Alexandria Frisch, W&M'04, PhD candidate, NY Univ., **"Isaac Goes Under the Knife: The Rabbis' Dissection of Genesis 22"**

10/18/12: Lisa Leff, Assoc Professor, American Univ., **"The Political Meaning and Cultural Crisis of Emancipation"**

10/23-25/12: Lori Lefkowitz, Ruderman Professor of Jewish Studies, Northeastern Univ. **Five lectures on Gender and Judaism**

11/8/12: Graham Schweig, Professor, Christopher Newport Univ., **"Erotic Religion, Sacred Love: Jewish and Hindu Mystical Experience and Expression"**

11/15/12: Maggie Kirsh, W&M '02, PhD, Univ. of Wisconsin, **"God, the Holocaust, and Halakha"**

11/27/12: Danny Zemel, Rabbi, Temple Micah, DC, **"Reform Judaic Thought Today"**

11/29/12: Jeffrey Gurock, Professor, Yeshiva Univ., **"Orthodox Judaic Thought Today"**

11/29/12: W. Chris Hackett, Professor, Australian Catholic Univ., **"Anthropomorphism and Negative Theology: Moral Reasoning and Religious Problems"**

12/03/12: Nauman Faizi, PhD candidate, Univ. of VA, **"Ecology and Ethics"**

12/04/12: Matthew Klein, W&M '06, Cantor, Congregation Beth El, **"Conservative Judaic Thought Today"**

2/12/13: Maggie Kirsh, W&M '02, PhD, Univ. of Wisconsin, **"Young Jewish Voices from Interwar Poland"**

2/15/13: Maggie Kirsh, W&M '02, PhD, Univ. of Wisconsin, **"Whose Redemption? Child Holocaust Survivors and Their New Lives, 1945-1950"**

3/12/13: David L. O'Hara, Professor, Augustana College, **"A Moral Equivalent of War?: William James on Evil and War"**

3/12-14/13: James Phelan, Professor, Ohio State Univ., **"A Discussion of Millu, Smoke Over Birkenau" Parts I and II**

3/13/13: Jonathan Hess, Professor, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Director, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, **"Shylock's Daughters: Philosemitism, Popular Culture, and the Liberal Imagination"**

3/21/13: Patricia Heberer, Historian, US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC., **"German Physicians and Nazi Crimes: The Medical Profession and Its Role in Nazi Policy"**

4/09/13: Bennett F. Miller, Rabbi, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, NJ, **"Constructing a Theology after the Holocaust"**

4/12-14/13: Stuart Rockoff, Ph.D., Director, History Dept., Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, MS, **"Jews in Colonial America" & "Bagels & Grits: How Jews Found a Home in the South"**

4/25/13: Maggie F. Kirsch, Ph.D., Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, WI. **"The Landscape of Shoah Memory"**

Donor Opportunities

If you wish to support the Department of Religious Studies by contributing to our operating funds, you may do so by sending a **check** made payable to the William and Mary Foundation and designate it for the Department of Religious Studies. The mailing address is The Department of Religious Studies, College of William and Mary, P.O. Box 8795, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795. To be more specific with your gift, please mention one of the codes (below) in your letter or on your check.

 A Jack Van Horn Prize for the Best Honors Thesis

 B Asia/Middle East Religion Program Fund

 C Chair's Discretionary Fund to Support the Activities of the Department

 D Stephen J. and Diane P. Lovell Endowment Fund to Support the Judaic Studies Program

 E Religious Studies Fund for the Department Library [Wren] Book Purchases

 F Religious Studies Account

 G Alumni to Campus to Speak to Students

 H Distinguished Scholars to Campus to Speak to Students

 I Annual Lecture on a Contemporary Religion Issue

If you prefer to make an on-line gift, you may do so by connecting to our website: http://www.wm.edu/religious_studies/ and clicking on "Give to the Department of Religious Studies."

*July 12-June 13 Donors: T. Ashlock, W.&S. Bangel, B. Burkart, C. Darnell, R. Davis, A. Ford, K.&J. Goldberg, A. Hicks, A. Hodges, M. Kirsh, K. Kranzberg, Z. Krohmal, J.&E. Low, A. McIntosh, J. Morgan, S. Page, M. Perry, M.&K. Poteet, K. Ragsdale, M.&B. Soffin, S. Smith, M.&K. Stachel, K. Toker, R. Tuttle, A. Zacharoff

Fall 2013 Courses

R.S. 203: History and Religion of Ancient Israel	J. Galambush
R.S. 203: History and Religion of Ancient Israel	J. Galambush
R.S. 204: Christian Origins	M. Daise
R.S. 208: Intro to American Religions	A. Blazer
R.S. 210: Intro to Christianity	A. Angelov
R.S. 211: Intro to Jewish Thought	M. Raphael
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	T. Sonn
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 214: Intro to Buddhism	K. Vose
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	S. Williams
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	S. Williams
R.S. 308: Topics in Islam and Gender in America and the West	A. Jerome
R.S. 308: Topics in Women and Religion in America	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 318: Islam in the Modern World	T. Sonn
R.S. 323: Warfare and Ethics	S. Williams
R.S. 328: Midrash	M. Raphael
R.S. 332: Religion and Society in the Middle Ages	A. Angelov
R.S. 335: Modern Jewish and Christian Thought	J. Morreall
R.S. 345: Religion, Colonization and Nationalism in N. Amer	A. Blazer
R.S. 349: Transnationalism, Immigration and Religion	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 357: The Letters of Paul	M. Daise
R.S. 367: Tibetan Religion	K. Vose
R.S. 369: Hindu Sacred Texts	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 481: Independent Study	Department
R.S. 495: Honors	Department

Spring 2014 Courses

R.S. 150: Fr Seminar—Temples, Tombs, and Topography: An Explanation of Sacred Space in India	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 150: Fr. Seminar – Religion, Ethics and Film	S. Williams
R.S. 201: Intro to Religion	M. Raphael
R.S. 208: Intro to American Religions	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	T. Sonn
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 215: History of Religion of East Asia	Staff
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	S. Williams
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	S. Williams
R.S. 302: Torah	M. Raphael
R.S. 305: Biblical Wisdom	J. Galambush
R.S. 308: Topics in Religion and Sports	A. Blazer
R.S. 309: The Holocaust	M. Raphael
R.S. 317: Women in Islam	T. Sonn
R.S. 335: Modern Jewish and Christian Thought	J. Morreall
R.S. 346: Religion, the State, and American Politics	A. Blazer
R.S. 348: African American Religion	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 378: Psychology of Religion	L. Ventis
R.S. 391: Theory and Method	K. Vose
R.S. 482: Independent Study	Department
R.S. 496: Honors	Department

