



*Department of Religious Studies*  
**NEWSLETTER**  
*2010-11/FALL 2010/Volume 11*

Greetings from the new Chair of Religious Studies:

After ten years guiding our department through some impressive growth and other big changes, Marc Raphael has stepped down as Chair of our department. I always admired his organization and his open style of leadership, and I'll emulate these as I take over. Tamara Cooper, our Business Manager, does a masterful job with such things as course scheduling, handling student crises, departmental paperwork, and our ever-dwindling budget. It's reassuring to know that she'll be down the hall to answer my questions.

Two Visiting Professors from last year—Daniel Washburn and Jacob Goodson—have returned for a second year, and they'll add a lot to our course lineup. To give you a taste, Prof. Washburn is doing a freshman seminar called "Science Fiction and the Human Condition" and Prof. Goodson one called "The Quest for Perfection in American Sports." We'll also offer our standard courses in the Western and Eastern religious traditions, along with Prof. Kevin Vose's new version of the Theory and Method course. Befitting the times we live in, Prof. Julie Galambush is doing a Special Topics course on "Violence, War and Peace" and Prof. Goodson a course on "Warfare and Ethics." To put everything in perspective, I'm doing "Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion." If you visit the campus this year, you might want to sit in on one of these.

Less visible are all the research and writing projects faculty are engaged in. You can get some idea of those in the following pages. Our students, too, will be hard at work on Independent Studies and Honors Theses.

All of this activity is supported by the State of Virginia, of course, but less and less with each passing year. The last number I heard for the state's contribution to our budget was 14%. There have been no salary increases in three years, and our operating budget has been cut repeatedly. To keep going, our department has increasingly depended on gifts from alums and friends. Those make possible the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Distinguished Visiting Professorship in Judaic Studies, the Hans O. Tiefel annual Lecture in Religious Ethics, and other events for students and faculty. For all gifts large and small, we're grateful.

Cordially,  
John Morreall (pronounced MOR-EL)  
Professor and Chair of Religious Studies

## *The Faculty Changes*

### On Leave Fall 2010

Marc L. Raphael

### Visiting Professors, 2010-2011

**Jacob Goodson:** Ph.D. candidate, University of Virginia; teaching Religion and Ethics (F'10, S'11), Ecology and Ethics (F'10), Warfare and Ethics (S'11), and a Freshman Seminar (S'11).

**Donald Polaski:** Ph.D. and M.Div., Duke University; teaching History and Religion of Ancient Israel (F'10, S'11).

**Daniel Washburn:** Ph.D. Stanford University; teaching Introduction to the History of Christianity (F'10, S'11), Medieval Religion and Society (F'10), and Freshman Seminars (F'10, S'11).

## *The Faculty News*

**Michael Daise:** This last year Professor Daise taught the courses 'Christian Origins' and 'Judaism in the Greco-Roman World', and had the privilege of directing an extremely well done honors thesis on sacramental implications of the Bohemian Reformation and the contemporary Episcopal Church. In February he organized and hosted an interdisciplinary symposium with Classical Studies on 'Religion and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean World', inviting Emeritus Professor Ithamar Gruenwald from Tel Aviv University. In May he delivered the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Milton and Shirley Salasky Lecture in Judaic Studies at Temple Beth El, Williamsburg. And in May and June he delivered a lecture series on 'Christianity in Late Antiquity' at Hickory Neck Episcopal Church. In his research Mr. Daise delivered a paper to the 'Construction of Christian Identities' group of the Society of Biblical Literature, submitted three articles to the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten* (a major reference work on the use of Hebrew and Aramaic terms in the Dead Sea Scrolls), submitted a fourth article to the journal *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi*, saw a fifth article come to print (written for the *Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*, Hebrew University, Jerusalem), published fifteen book reviews for the *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* and the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (one of them with William & Mary student Bethany Rishell) and continued his editorial

work as board member and book review editor for the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*

**Ravi Gupta:** Professor Gupta designed a new course this year, "Hindu Sacred Texts," a seminar-style in-depth study of the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*. He continued work on two books about the *Bhagavata Purana* for Columbia University Press (more about them on the following pages). He was also elected to serve as Vice President for the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies, which meets annually with the American Academy of Religion.

The past year was also punctuated by numerous invited lectures. Dr. Gupta was awarded the Shivdasani Research Fellowship at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, where he delivered a series of four public lectures and conducted research in the secret, underground stacks of the Bodleian library (well okay, they brought the books above-ground for me to read). He also conducted a month-long lecture tour of universities around India and met with India's Minister of Education to discuss the possibility of offering Religious Studies as a subject at Indian universities.

**David Holmes:** Mr. Holmes spoke to the New York City Alumni, to the Episcopal Guild of Scholars, and at Charlottesville's Festival of the Book. He gave the baccalaureate address at William and Mary, delivered the commencement address at Hood College, and received his second honorary doctorate. He has finished a book entitled *The Faiths of the Post-War Presidents*, scheduled for publication by the University of Georgia Press this summer. He now hopes to complete a novel set in the context of the Muscular Christianity movement.

Because of changes in the Virginia Retirement System, Mr. Holmes's retirement was postponed to June 2011. He was delighted to have a relaxed year of closure, instead of a forced sprint, to bring an end to 46 years at William and Mary. He will again give farewell lectures, this time entitled "Farewell Lectures, Second Season."

In the spring semester, a section of the departmental website will contain the schedule for these lectures, some of which may occur on weekends and be followed by dinners with alumni. The College is establishing an endowment in his honor that looks to support a named professorship in the fields of Reformation Studies and American Religious History.

**John Morreall:** In the fall, Professor Morreall taught Theory and Method, and Modern Religious Thought (changing its name to "Modern Jewish and Christian Thought" for 2010). In the spring, he taught Roman

Catholicism since 1800, along with Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion. His book *Comic Relief: A Comprehensive Philosophy of Humor* was published by Wiley-Blackwell in October. In July, he submitted the final version of *The Religion Toolkit: A Complete Guide to Religious Studies* (Wiley-Blackwell). Co-written with Professor Tamara Sonn, this is the only religion textbook that starts off each chapter with a *New Yorker* cartoon. As of July, Professor Morreall is Chair of the Religious Studies Department.

**Marc Lee Raphael:** Marc Lee Raphael, the Nathan and Sophia Gumenick Professor of Judaic Studies, was honored to take 22 Tribe students to Prague for six weeks of May-June 2010 to study with him and several professors from Charles University. The highlight was the trip, with his wife and the students, to the ghetto/concentration camp of Terezin (Theresienstadt) on his wife's birthday, the precise day on which her relatives (a father, mother and infant) were deported from Prague to Terezin (and eventually gassed at Auschwitz). He also completed (Spring) and copy-edited (Fall) *THE SYNAGOGUE IN AMERICA: A SHORT HISTORY* (NYU Press, 2011).

**Tamara Sonn:** Professor Sonn was on research leave during 2009-2010. She received a Fulbright fellowship to write a book on Muhammad Iqbal at the Iqbal Center of the International Islamic University in Islamabad. Unfortunately, her house was decimated after being struck by lightning while no one was home, so she had to defer that project and oversee rebuilding the place. She did manage to complete editing the *SAGE Concise Handbook of Islamic Studies* and produce an expanded and updated version of her *Islam: A Brief History*. Both books were published in the spring. She and Professor Morreall also wrote a text introducing the academic study of religion. Wiley-Blackwell will publish it – *The Religion Toolkit: A Complete Guide to Religious Studies* – in spring 2011. And she continued to edit Wiley-Blackwell's *Religion Compass* ([www.religion-compass.com](http://www.religion-compass.com)), *Oxford Islamic Studies Online* ([www.oxfordislamicstudies.com](http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com)), and serve as *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Islamic Studies* (<http://www.oxfordbibliographiesonline.com/>) editor-in-chief. But she is glad to be back on campus and with students again. The rest of the world is too crazy!

**Kevin Vose:** Kevin Vose continued developing and teaching courses on Buddhism, adding two new courses to the long-term curriculum: Tibetan Religion (RELG 367) and Buddhist Philosophy (RELG 380). He also taught the department's Theory and Method course for the first time and enjoyed a seminar format with our

majors. He co-directed William and Mary's East Asian Studies program and took part in the planning of a new South Asian Studies minor, for which the College hopes to develop a statewide consortium and to expand study abroad opportunities.

He continues his research on a ninety-volume collection of recently discovered medieval Tibetan manuscripts, publishing two articles in the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* and presenting a paper at the International Association of Tibetan Studies conference in Vancouver over the summer. He continues to co-edit the Buddhism Section of the online journal *Religion Compass* (<http://religion-compass.com/buddhism/>).

### *Honors Theses 2010*

**Jessica Carole Lowe,** "Sacramental Exclusivity: Exploring the Bohemian Reformation and the Contemporary Episcopal Church Through Thomas Luckmann's *The Invisible Religion*" (High Honors)

Awarded the Jack D. Van Horn prize for high honors.

### *Academic Achievement 2010*

**Austin Lewis Raynor** was the recipient of the Religious Studies Undergraduate Academic Achievement Award.

### *Alumni News*

**Lea Harrison '08:** Lea graduated from the Masters of Theological Studies program at Candler. In Aug, she started a year-long AmeriCorps Vista program in Fredericksburg, VA at the Bragg Hill Family Life Center.

**Allie Rosner '06:** Allie is the new Associate Pastor at the Williamsburg United Methodist Church.

**Jennifer McCann Spivey '03:** Jennifer was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) on May 30, 2010. She is excited to be returning to VA where she will be the Associate Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Martinsville.

## 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 2009/10 schedule:

**09/30/09: Lox, Stock & Bagel Breakfast** for Religious Studies faculty, majors and minors.

**10/7/09:** Chrystie Flournoy Swiney, Visiting Instructor, College of William and Mary. **“Life after William and Mary”** for Religious Studies Major and Minors.

**10/26-28/09: Alan Levenson**, Professor, Laura and Alvin Siegal College of Judaic Studies, Cleveland, OH. **Five lectures on Jewish History.**

**10/28/09: Lox, Stock & Bagel Breakfast** for Religious Studies faculty, majors and minors.

**11/17/09: Danny Zemel**, Rabbi, Temple Micah, Washington DC. **“American Reform Jewish Thought Today”**

**11/19/09: Jeffrey Gurock**, Professor, Yeshiva University, New York, NY. **“Varieties of American Orthodoxy Today”**

**2/1-4/10: Jeremy Cohen**, Professor, Tel Aviv University. **Five lectures on various aspects of the interaction between Judaism and Christianity.**

**2/3/10: Lox, Stock & Bagel Breakfast** for Religious Studies faculty, majors and minors.

**2/07/10: Ithamar Gruenwald**, Emeritus Professor, Tel Aviv University; **B. Spaeth, V. Panoussi, M. Daise**, Professors, College of William and Mary. **“Religion & Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean”**

**2/09/10: Mary Schilling**, Director, Career Services, College of William and Mary. **“I’m majoring in Religious Studies. Then what?”** for Religious Studies faculty, majors and minors.

**3/26/10: Randi Rashkover**, Professor, George Mason University. **“Franz Rosenzweig”**

**4/7/10: Bruce Hoffman**, Professor, Georgetown University. **“Terrorism and Ethics?: How Terrorists Justify the Violence They Inflict”**

**4/13/10: Bennett Miller**, Rabbi, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ. **“Jewish Responses to God in a Post-Holocaust Era”**

\*July 09-June 10 Donors: W. Bangel, E. Berley, A. Bevis, M. Caskey, J. & P. Comey, J. Devereaux, A. Dickey, E. Gorman, M. Guillaudeu, M. Henszey, A. Hicks, V. Irby, E. Jackson, K. Kranzberg, K. Nelson, J. Neubauer, M. Poteet, K. Ragsdale, L. Reynolds, E. Rindler, J. Robertson, S. Schworer, S. Silver, A. Smith, S. Sobel, M. Soffin, S. Sweeney, L. Tancredi, K. Toker, R. Tuttle, K. Williamson, and M. Wunnenberg.

## Professor Ravi Gupta

A potter gently shapes a lump of clay upon her wheel. A carpenter hews and joins measured pieces of wood. Creation, we see, is often a process of reasoned thought and careful construction. And yet, just as often, creation arises in far more unpredictable circumstances—from chaos, transgression, and failure. This interplay of creation and chaos is a major theme in the stories of the *Bhagavata Purana*, one of India’s most beloved Sanskrit texts. A vivid example is the Churning of the Ocean, an ancient narrative that is retold in different forms across South and Southeast Asia.

The gods and demons declared a truce and decided to churn the ocean in order to extract the elixir of immortality that was latent deep within the sea. They uprooted the huge Mount Mandara to serve as the churning rod, while the divine serpent Vasuki became the rope. But the mountain kept sinking into the ocean and so Vishnu took the form of a turtle and supported it on his back. The gods held the serpent on one side and the demons held it on the other. As they churned, the ocean frothed, the mountains shook, and from that chaos emerged . . . not the elixir, but a dangerous poison that began spreading in all directions. Everyone panicked and called on Shiva for help, who drank the poison and thus saved the world. Once the dust had settled, the gods and demons continued churning and—rather anticlimactically—out came the elixir of immortality.

The churning of the ocean is recounted beautifully in the *Bhagavata Purana*, with a lot more detail and flourish. What was it about this story that made it so popular and powerful, among royalty and laity? Was it the image of cooperation among opposites, or the possibility of success despite all-consuming failure, or maybe the interplay of human effort and divine grace?

In their two forthcoming books for Columbia University Press, Ravi Gupta and Kenneth Valpey (Chinese University of Hong Kong) will translate the Churning of the Ocean and many more chapters from the *Bhagavata Purana*. The *Bhagavata* is a genre-busting piece of Sanskrit literature. Although primarily written as an ancient history (Purana), the *Bhagavata* is also a work of exquisite poetry, interwoven with dense philosophy and difficult vocabulary. The many layers of the text, including ways in which it has been performed in dance, drama, and music, will be the topic of Gupta and Valpey's second book.

## Religious Humor

A child was watching his mother sift through and delete a long list of junk E-mail on the computer screen. "This reminds me of the Lord's Prayer," the child said. "What do you mean?" the mother asked. "You know. That part about 'deliver us from E-mail.'" [www.butlerwebs.com/jokes/religious.htm](http://www.butlerwebs.com/jokes/religious.htm)

## Courses 2010-2011

### FALL 2010

R.S. 150: Fr Seminar – Sci Fi and the Human Condition	D. Washburn
R.S. 150: Fr Seminar – Gospel of John	M. Daise
R.S. 203: Hist/Rel of Ancient Israel	J. Galambush
R.S. 203: Hist/Rel of Ancient Israel	D. Polaski
R.S. 204: Christian Origins	M. Daise
R.S. 205: Reading Bible in Hebrew I	N. Zahavi-Ely
R.S. 210: Intro to Christianity	D. Washburn
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	T. Sonn
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	R. Gupta
R.S. 214: Intro to Buddhism	K. Vose
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	J. Goodson
R.S. 308: Topics: Hindu Sacred Texts	R. Gupta
R.S. 308: Topics: Violence, War, and Peace	J. Galambush
R.S. 318: Islam in the Modern World	T. Sonn
R.S. 320: Pagans & Christians in the Roman World	J. Donohue
R.S. 321: Ecology and Ethics	J. Goodson
R.S. 330: Significant Books	D. Holmes
R.S. 332: Medieval Religion & Society	D. Washburn
R.S. 335: Modern Jewish and Christian Thought	J. Morreall
R.S. 345: Religion in America to 1840	D. Holmes
R.S. 346: Religion in America 1840-Pres	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 380: Buddhist Philosophy	K. Vose

### SPRING 2011

R.S. 150: Fr Seminar – Quest for Perfection in American Sports	J. Goodson
R.S. 150: Fr Seminar – Sci Fi and the Human Condition	D. Washburn
R.S. 150: Fr Seminar – God and the Protest Novel	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 203: Hist/Rel of Ancient Israel	J. Galambush
R.S. 203: Hist/Rel of Ancient Israel	D. Polaski
R.S. 204: Christian Origins	M. Daise
R.S. 206: Reading Bible in Hebrew II	N. Zahavi-Ely
R.S. 210: Intro to Christianity	D. Washburn
R.S. 211: Intro to Jewish Thought	M. Raphael
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	T. Sonn
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	R. Gupta
R.S. 215: Hist/Rel of East Asia	K. Vose
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	J. Goodson
R.S. 305: Biblical Wisdom	J. Galambush
R.S. 308: Topics: Moral Issues of WWII	D. Holmes
R.S. 309: The Holocaust	M. Raphael
R.S. 317: Women in the Muslim World	T. Sonn
R.S. 323: Warfare and Ethics	J. Goodson
R.S. 330: Significant Books in Western Religion	D. Holmes
R.S. 342: Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion	J. Morreall
R.S. 358: Jesus and the Gospels	M. Daise
R.S. 360: Gods & Goddesses of India	R. Gupta
R.S. 363: Sociology of Religion	C. Pieper
R.S. 378: Psychology of Religion	L. Ventis
R.S. 391: Theory and Method	K. Vose

## *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.

<u>A</u>	Jack Van Horn Prize for the Best Honors Thesis
<u>B</u>	Asia/Middle East Religion Program Fund
<u>C</u>	Chair's Discretionary Fund to Support the Activities of the Department
<u>D</u>	Stephen J. and Diane P. Lovell Endowment Fund to Support the Judaic Studies Program
<u>E</u>	Religious Studies Fund for the Department Library [Wren] Book Purchases
<u>F</u>	Religious Studies Account
<u>G</u>	Alumni to Campus to Speak to Students
<u>H</u>	Distinguished Scholars to Campus to Speak to Students
<u>I</u>	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](http://www.wm.edu/religious_studies) and clicking on "Give to the Department of Religious Studies."