Time sharpens the memories that count. I remember my first drive into Iowa City, more than fifty years ago. I was scared. I was coming to accept a position in Jewish Studies in what was then called The School of Religion at The University of Iowa. I had no idea what to expect except that I knew my PhD and rabbinic training ill-prepared me to give lectures to a largely non-Jewish population of students in the College of Liberal Arts. Now, decades have come and gone along with hundreds of lectures in which thousands of Iowa undergraduates have participated who opted to enroll in my courses. It has been an amazing experience. It bears mentioning here that courses in Jewish Studies were first offered at The University of Iowa, just when nazism was gathering force in Europe. Over the years, individuals and groups supported these courses because of the sound belief that the pursuit of knowledge is the best antidote to a poison like nazism. Now the time has come for me to hand control of these courses over to others. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to the tens of thousands of students who took my courses over the years. I will miss them and remain ever in their debt. Thank you. Additionally, I am happy to report that I will continue to teach, as an emeritus professor, my signature course—which is known simply as “Quest.” This is possible due largely to the extraordinary generosity of two of my former students--Joe Russo, the filmmaker, and John Shallman, the crisis coordinator super-agent--who have made their marks on the west coast. I am delighted to be able to continue to offer this course and continue to encounter a new generation of Iowa students.
Not long after my arrival at Iowa in August 2001, I had occasion to attend a conference in Belgium. In the course of the meetings several colleagues, both American and European, congratulated me on my appointment to the “famous” Department of Religious Studies (then called the School of Religion) at Iowa. As to the longstanding prominence of the department in Religious Studies, I could not have agreed with them more. Indeed, I had been aware of the department’s special place in the academic world since my undergraduate days. And as I begin retirement, I remain deeply grateful to have been part of the ongoing project to foster the dispassionate study of religion at a public university.

My interest in the European Reformations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began when, as an undergraduate I spent a year studying in Paris. The fascination grew in the years that followed and culminated in being named as the Daniel J. Krumm Family Chair in Reformation Studies. I am profoundly grateful to Ann Krumm and her family for their generosity in making the chair a reality. I also hope that my efforts and achievements have over the past two decades honored the memory of her husband and his faith commitment in the ways that she intended when establishing the chair.

I am equally indebted to the Department of Religious Studies, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the University of Iowa. For twenty-one years I have had the privilege of working with students and colleagues who share my interests and, in addition, allowed me to focus my research on questions that are dear to me. The classroom experience at Iowa has been superb in every respect. I have been able to offer general undergraduate courses on the development of religious traditions in Europe and the wider Atlantic world. Advanced courses as well as graduate seminars on various facets of the Reformations have been equally rewarding. In every instance, students have demonstrated a genuine appreciation for the subject. I am especially proud of the dozen doctoral students with whom I have worked. In addition, my colleagues in the department have always offered an enriching variety of subjects, methodological approaches, and interpretative structures to the study of religion. I have learned much from them.

Iowa’s support for my research has led to the publication of several monographs and edited volumes as well as a number of articles on various aspects of the Reformations. I have been able to spend considerable time in France engaged in close archival research and poring over the manuscript records of the French Reformed Churches. Iowa has been ever supportive in my presentation of the results of these research forays in various print publications as well as in a series of national and international academic conferences. My European colleagues have also been encouraging. On five different occasions they invited me to serve as short-term visiting professor in French universities and research institutes. Along the way, I have been gratified to have received recognition of my efforts with honors such as the Regents Award for Faculty Excellence and an honorary doctorate from the University of Lyon in France. Perhaps the most cherished accolade took place several years ago when, in a ceremony in Paris, the French government “knighted” me as Chevalier dans l’ordre des Palmes académiques.

None of this would have been possible without the support and encouragement of colleagues in the Department of Religious Studies and the wider academic community at the University of Iowa. The past several decades have been as good as it gets. I am deeply grateful.
**FACULTY NEWS**

**Richard Brent Turner’s Book receives ARSC Certificate of Merit Award**

Dr. Richard Brent Turner’s book Soundtrack to a Movement: African American Islam, Jazz, and Black Internationalism, has won a Certificate of Merit in the 2022 Association for Recorded Sound Collections Award for Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research in Jazz.

Begun in 1991, the ARSC Awards are given to authors of books, articles or recording liner notes to recognize those publishing the very best work today in recorded sound research. In giving these awards, ARSC recognizes the contributions of these individuals and aims to encourage others to emulate their high standards and to promote readership of their work. Awards are presented annually in each category for best history and best discography, and others may be acknowledged with Certificates of Merit. Awards are presented to both the authors and publishers of winning publications.

Turner will be recognized during an awards ceremony to be held during ARSC’s annual conference on May 20, 2023. More information can be found on their website ARSC Awards.

**Dr. Nabhan-Warren named Associate Vice President for Research**

*by Leslie Revaux*

Kristy Nabhan-Warren was selected as one of two new associate vice presidents for research in the Office of the Vice President for Research. The new associate vice presidents for research will recommend new programs to stimulate external funding in all disciplines and work to stimulate new interactions between interdisciplinary research teams. Nabhan-Warren’s position will have a special focus on arts, humanities, and social sciences. She will also advise the Vice President for Research on the development of new research initiatives.

Nabhan-Warren’s research focuses on U.S. Latinx Catholics, and the intersections of religion, work, and migration in the Midwestern United States. Her newest book, which came out last September with the University of North Carolina Press, is *Meatpacking America: How Migration, Work and Faith Unite and Divide the Heartland.* A deep ethnographic study that focuses on the intersections of migration, religion, and work in Iowa, *Meatpacking America* has garnered much interest from academics and the general public alike.

“I am so excited about this new role within OVPR, and to be part of Marty’s team to support and amplify University colleagues’ research and scholarship,” said Nabhan-Warren. “This is a unique and exciting opportunity to innovate alongside colleagues from many colleges and OVPR. I can’t wait to get started.”
Tucker Gregor is currently working as a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Rhetoric. In this role, Tucker is the instructor of record, teaching Introduction to Rhetoric (RHET:1030). He enjoys introducing his students to college-level critical thinking, reading, and discussion. Tucker is also a Graduate Student Co-Leader in the Rhetoric Professional Development Practicum (PDP), where he provides first-time rhetoric instructors/teaching assistants with a forum to dialogue and develop their pedagogy.

Allison Isadore, Ph.D. pre-comp, is in her first year and already doing great things. Her piece titled, “Why I Study Women Religious”, was published September 28, 2022 in the University of Notre Dame Cushwa Center. In this piece Allison shares, “I study women religious because their histories and contributions matter despite being previously ignored.” Allison’s research interest is focused on the twentieth-century American Civil Rights Movement and the Catholic Church’s response to racism and the participation of Catholic clergy, nuns, and laypeople in marches, sit-ins, and kneel-ins during the 1950s and 1960s. Besides her busy schedule in the graduate program, Allison also serves as the Assistant Director for the Assistant Director for the American Catholic Historical Association. She is also one of the hosts for the podcast New Books in Catholic Studies a podcast channel on the New Books Network.
Graduate Student News (cont.)

Kefas Lamak Ph.D. pre-comp, was awarded an ASMEA Research Grant of $2500 for his paper on “Religion or Violence in the Name of Allah: The Rise of an Islamist Extremist Group in Northern Nigeria in the 2000s and the Threat it Poses to Civility, Freedom and Democracy” which he presented at the Fifteenth Annual ASMEA Conference on November 5 - 7, 2022 in Washington, D.C.

Kefas also gave the following presentations: “Recovery Promises and Pitfalls: Rediscovering the Efficacy of Tarok People’s Pre-colonial Herbal Medicine” at the History, Classics, and Religion Graduate Student’s Association Conference, March 2022; “Change, Adaption and Preservation” at 10th Annual World Languages Graduate Organization Conference, 2022; and “Religion and Migration: The Emergence of Immigrant Christianity among Nigerian Communities in the Cosmopolitan Cities of United States from the 2000s” at the Tri-Faith Initiative at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.


Kefas’ article “Reading Black Theology of Liberation in the African American Christianity Experience of the 1900’s through 2000’s” was accepted for publication in the Black Theology: An International Journal.

Kefas also received the Hugh Volrath Ross Scholarship for Summer 2022.

Kaitlyn Lindgren-Hansen (Kaity), Ph.D. post-comp, was competitively selected to serve as a Humanities for the Public Good Intern with The Multicultural Development Center of Iowa during summer 2022. Kaity is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Religious Studies and advised by Dr. Diana Cates. As a part of her grant, Kaity also interned with Astig Planning, a local environmental and racial justice planning firm. Following her internship Kaity related that, "It’s a great program, and I learned a lot and got to work with some amazing people and organizations in Iowa City this summer.”


John Sheridan, Ph.D. post-comp, was a recipient of the 2021 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award. These awards are given annually to a select group of graduate teaching assistants who have effectively promoted learning and creativity both inside and outside the classroom while demonstrating enthusiasm and dedication to student success.

https://now.uiowa.edu/2022/04/01/2021-outstanding-teaching-assistant-award-recipients
Religious Studies Announces First Annual Dr. Michelene Pesantubbee Religion and Social Justice Scholarship

This scholarship was set up in honor of Professor Emeritus Michelene E. Pesantubbee who passed away following a fight against cancer.

By Charlotte Brookins

The Department of Religious Studies has awarded the first annual Dr. Michelene Pesantubbee Religion and Social Justice Scholarship to Lacie Teal for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Teal, a first-year graduate student earning her master's degree in social work, is the first ever winner of this $1,500 scholarship. For the award application, Teal submitted a paper on the importance of water as an ecological resource to Native American tribes, as well as the impact it had on their society and overall wellbeing.

"With my heritage as a Native American, [I] wanted to explore some of the social issues that I could help resolve through my work in the Master of Social Work program at the University of Iowa," Teal says.

Her passion for social justice and advocacy, especially regarding Native Americans and the environment inspired her to apply for the scholarship.

"As I get more opportunities for research in my program, I am greatly looking forward to continuing this work and seeing what role I can play as a social worker in helping the environment and the well-being of others," Teal says.

The scholarship was created in honor of Pesantubbee, a longtime professor of Native American Religious Traditions at the University of Iowa who died in 2021. Its purpose is to reward and encourage undergraduate-student engagement in religious and social justice issues.

Pesantubbee’s research interests included Native American religious practice, religion and gender, as well as religion and violence - she was especially interested in questions of religion and social justice. The scholarship in her name is awarded based on either an essay or a community project that highlights the relationship between religion and social justice or injustice.

"When Michelene passed away, her colleagues felt a strong need to make sure that her contributions to the university and her concern with religion and social justice, and especially Native American rights, would have a lasting impact," Professor Morten Schlüter, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies explains. "This scholarship is one way to ensure that Michelene's legacy will continue."

The Michelene Pesantubbee Religion and Social Justice Award will accept applications through the scholarship portal annually during the Fall semester for the following academic year.
Alumni Books

Molinist Philosophical and Theological Ventures
By Kirk McGregor

This volume represents a significant advance of the philosophical and theological conversation surrounding Molinism. It opens by arguing that Molinism constitutes the best explanation of the scriptural data on divine sovereignty, human freedom, predestination, grace, and God’s salvic will. The alleged biblical prooftexts for open theism are better explained, according to Kirk MacGregor, by Molinism. Responding to philosophical critics of Molinism, MacGregor offers a novel solution to the well-known grounding objection and a robust critique of arguments from explanatory priority. He also presents a Molinist interpretation of branching time models as heuristic illustrations of the relationship between possibility and feasibility. Seeking to push Molinism into new territories, MacGregor furnishes a Molinist account of sacred music, according to which music plays a powerful apologetic function. Finally, regarding the nature of hell, MacGregor contends that Molinism is compatible with both eternalism and eventual universalism.

Phospheral Hermeneutics and the Priority of Questions in Religions: Bringing the Discourse of Gods and Buddhas Down to Earth
By Nathan Eric Dickman, Ph.D. 2009

Buddhas, gods, prophets and oracles are often depicted as asking questions. But what are we to understand when Jesus asks “Who do you say that I am?”, or Mazu, the Classical Zen master asks, “Why do you seek outside?” Is their questioning a power or weakness? Is it something human beings are only capable of due to our finitude? Is there any kind of question that is a power?

Focusing on three case studies of questions in divine discourse on the level of story - the god depicted in the Jewish Bible, the master Mazu in his recorded sayings literature, and Jesus as he is depicted in canonized Christian Gospels - Nathan Eric Dickman meditates on human responses to divine questions. He considers the purpose of interreligious dialogue and the provocative kind of questions that seem to purposefully decenter us, drawing on methods from confessionally-oriented hermeneutics and skills from critical thinking.

He allows us to see alternative ways of interpreting religious texts through approaches that look beyond reading a text for the improvement of our own religion or for access to some metaphysically transcendent reality. This is the first step in a phenomenology of religions that is inclusive, diverse, relevant and grounded in the world we live in.
Thanks to everyone who came out for our first-ever
Game Night featuring Dungeons & Dragons

It was such a great time, we're already discussing the next Game Night!

Upcoming Events:

February 1, 2023  “Body and Text, Religious Practices in the Revitalization of Toltec and Aztec Religion” by Dr. Yanitsa Buendia de Llaca, Cal Poly University

April 20-22, 2023  “Embattled America” by Dr. Jason Bivins, North Carolina State University (co-sponsored with Political Science and Public Policy Center)

November 7-8, 2023  Dr. Andrew Whitehead is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Association of Religion Data Archives at the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture at IUPUI (Co-sponsored with the Department of History and Kirkwood Community College)
The Department of Religious Studies Mourns the Loss of Dr. Helen Goldstein

The Department of Religious Studies faculty, staff, students, and emeritus professors are mourning the loss of Associate Professor Emeritus Helen Goldstein, who passed away on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

Helen earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in Semitic Languages and History from Radcliffe College (1956), followed by an AAUW Traveling Fellowship at Oxford University (1957-58). In 1968 Professor Goldstein joined the faculty of the School of Religion (former name of Department of Religious Studies), specializing in medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy. She taught in the School of Religion until she retired, along with her husband Jonathan (a professor in History and Classics) in 1995. Professor Goldstein was the first woman faculty member in the School of Religion. Helen is remembered fondly by faculty and emeritus professors as immensely learned and possessing a great sense of humor. In 2012 the Department established an annual undergraduate award in her honor.

The department wishes to extend their deepest sympathy to Helen’s daughters, Risë and Rachel, her son-in-law Stephen Lester, and her sister Joyce Pollack. You may view the full obituary on the Lensing Funeral Home website.

Alumni Memories of Dr. Goldstein

Frances Flannery (Ph.D. 1999, M.A. 1994)
I have selfishly asked Maureen to print this lengthy tribute because I didn’t learn about Helen’s passing in time for her memorial. I loved Helen Goldstein. I loved that she was so tough on her students, because it made me a better academic. I loved when she told a class of mostly undergraduates who had mysteriously signed up for Jewish Mysticism that they were “at war...with the English language” and that they had to rewrite their papers and make them “better...so much better.” She then added, “Because if they aren’t [dramatic pause], I will grade you down. I will grade you So. Far. Down. And don’t think I won’t do it. Because 1...[looking them one by one in the eye] am a Mean. Old. Lady.” We graduate students in the back stifled our giggles, because we had already lived through several of her classes, and yes, the second round of papers were much better.

I also loved that she was so tender, which is a side that not many of her students – especially the men – got to see very often, if at all. I broke through her tough side early on because, as the first in my family to go to a brick and mortar 4 year college and then to graduate school, I didn’t know how not to be open and vulnerable, so I went to her office after a disastrous day in class to say that I had the impression that she thought I was stupid and maybe I was and I wanted her honest opinion. She responded, “I am hard on you because I know you are not stupid. I think you are very intelligent, and I believe you can absolutely do this.” We sat staring at one another for quite a long while, saw that we were each totally serious, and only after that I finally had confidence in myself to do the program, honestly and as myself. She never went easy on me, and I was glad for it.

Years later, after I entered the Ph.D. program, and again when I finished, she took me aside to say that she understood how hard it was to be a woman in the profession – and she did. In her office, which I enjoyed going to, she would not only correct my mistakes, but also share ideas for articles she wanted to write and drop personal tidbits, such as
Alumni Memories (cont.)

Nicolae Roddy (Ph.D. 1999)
I have so many remembrances of this extraordinary woman. I can still see her face from the time a few of us grad students showed up at her and Jonathan’s door trick-or-treating in costume. She was always gracious, and the thick cloud of smoke in her office always made it seem like some mystical revelatory experience. Zichrona l’vracha.

Rachel Wagner (Ph.D. 2003)
My best memory of Helen: I had a meeting with her about class and I was unexpectedly distraught because I’d just received a letter--at work….that scared the crap out of me. She calmly listened to me asking, “What do I do?” She said: “You don’t have to do anything. You don’t owe him a reply. You don’t owe him anything.” That was the first time someone told me I didn’t have to do something just because other people wanted me to. It stuck. Also, I worked my tail off and got a B in her Rabbinics class, and that was something to be proud of.

Beverly Bow (Ph.D. 1995)
Professor Helen Goldstein was a presence in my graduate studies at The University of Iowa. I admit, she at times had all of us shaking in our boots! She was formidable and impressive, all the more so as I learned the kinds of things she had to face in her own graduate school days.

Professor Goldstein was very knowledgeable in the classes she taught, and would give clear feedback on one’s work. Years after I graduated, I wrote Helen a condolence note when her husband Jonathan died, mentioning that my father had also recently died. I was quite touched to receive a return note in which she expressed sympathy to me for my dad. It was unexpected and sweet. RIP, Helen Goldstein, and condolences to your family.

How you can Contribute:

The Department of Religious Studies aims to be a hub of interdisciplinary inquiry into religious ideas, experiences, cultural expressions, and social movements. Religious Studies faculty makes use of multiple methods of study, including historical, philosophical, ethical, literary, linguistic, psychological, ethnographic, and digital approaches. We help students and the public to become better-informed, more nuanced thinkers who can successfully navigate a world of religious diversity. We rely on support from generous donors to continue to provide these enriching opportunities.

To support faculty, staff and students in the Department of Religious Studies, please visit givetoiowa.org/2023RE99 or contact Adam Blind at the UI Center for Advancement (adam.blind@foriowa.org).
As I write this, the warm fall weather here in Iowa City has rather suddenly turned cold and snowy – a reminder of how change is an integral part of the world we live in. This past year has seen many changes for the Department, with promises of more to come.

Many of these changes are positive. We are now out of all Covid-19 related restrictions, and department life is (almost) back to normal. We are again teaching in person and interacting directly with our students. We have also resumed departmental student events, and recently had a very successful Dungeons and Dragons night (thanks to Maureen and some of our great graduate students). Our courses have enrolled very well this fall, with all classes being at or near capacity. We are especially excited that a new course “Religious Diversity for Leadership and Entrepreneurs” enrolled over 100 students the very first time it was offered this fall. We have several other new courses in the works that we think will attract many students.

Our graduate students are doing extremely well and we are very proud of them. Several of our graduate students have had papers published in different venues over the past year, received various awards and accolades, and are presenting at conferences. A number of our current and past graduate students are presenting at the Religious Studies flagship conference, the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, which this year is back in-person. See Graduate News elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our faculty continues to be highly productive scholars, winning awards and publishing prolifically in peer-reviewed venues. With Covid-19 restrictions lifted, we are happy to once again be able to meet with and discuss our research with colleagues nationwide and internationally, as well as invite high-profile speakers to our campus.

Alumni of our graduate program have also been very active and have likewise published books and articles. See elsewhere in this newsletter for more information.

Change is also coming to the University of Iowa. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, under which the Department of Religious Studies operates, is planning a reorganization of its structure. Religious studies as a field is inherently interdisciplinary and we are excited about the possibilities of working more closely with a group of departments that we already have many connections with.

However, on a grimmer note, it has also become clear that there are forces within the University of Iowa administration that question the value of having a Department of Religious Studies at all at Iowa, and there have been indications that our Department could be marked for closure (!). From the perspective of senior university administrators, Religious Studies no longer attracts many majors and classes are sometimes smaller than in some other departments, creating lesser revenue streams. However, we in the Department believe not everything can be measured in dollars and cents and numbers of majors. There is a strong argument that access to balanced and informed courses on religious studies is needed now more than ever, as religion is ever more used and abused by politicians and vocal interest groups in the US and across the world. At the same time, we live in an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious world, and being knowledgeable about religious diversity is crucial for UI students to navigate a successful career and life. Even if our majors are relatively few and our classes not the largest in the College, our students are very enthusiastic and clearly feel we enrich their experience as majors in other departments. We believe that the Department of Religious Studies offers an important service to the University of Iowa in giving students who are interested a chance to learn about a wide range of religious traditions, and about different approaches to the study of religion. — We would love to hear from you about this issue, whether you are an alumnus/alumna of the University of Iowa who has enjoyed taking religious studies courses, or you simply are interested in the question of whether religious studies should be continued to be taught at public universities. Please write to me at morten-schlutter@uiowa.edu. Thank you!

Morten Schlütter,
Director,
Department of Religious Studies
The University of Iowa
Look for news and updates on Facebook (facebook.com/UIDeptofReligiousStudies) and Twitter (twitter.com/UIReligion?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwsrc%5Egooglean%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Etrue) and of course our web page (https://clas.uiowa.edu/religion/)

What can studying religions do for you?

- Assist you in navigating our increasingly diverse society
- Position you for the job market
- Empower you to travel the world
- Align you for departmental awards

Perspectives On Religion is published by The University of Iowa Department of Religious Studies. Publication of this newsletter was made possible by support from the M. Willard Lampe Fund and the Alice Marguerite Blough Development Fund.

Morten Schlütter
Director
Maureen Walterhouse
Editor

Raising Awareness ~ Building Bridges
Department of Religious Studies
clas.uiowa.edu/religion