

# newsletter

April 2004

(<http://religion.rutgers.edu>)

## Dept. News

### Dear Students, Alumni, Colleagues, and Friends:

We bring to you the long overdue issue of our newsletter. For many years the Department of Religion at Rutgers played the role of a so-called "service department," offering a variety of courses to the general student population in the university for their liberal arts education. All of our courses were heavily enrolled, but very few students actually chose religion as their major. This long persisted pattern has changed. As reported in the previous newsletter, during the last decade the number of students majoring in religion has steadily increased to the present level of 103 majors and 123 minors. With the growing numbers the grade point average of those majors has also gone up markedly. As you shall read in the following pages many of our majors graduated with Henry Rutgers and other honors, successfully completing their respective theses projects on intriguing subjects. This year's honors students are pursuing equally stimulating projects. We are gratified to have been able to attract so many students of high caliber to choose religion as the focus of their undergraduate education.

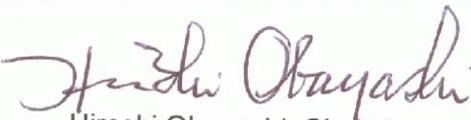
The department is also proud to report that Professor Edwin Bryant is the recipient of the highly competitive Dialogues Grant for undergraduate education. The grant has enabled him to enrich students' classroom experience in his "Hindu Gurus in the West" course with guests from outside representing many strains of Indian religion to be engaged in the dialogue of faiths with the students.

It is with pleasure to introduce two new faculty members: Professor Jawid Mojaddedi joined us in the fall of 2003 and is responsible for the field of Islam and Professor Tia M. Kolbaba will start teaching in the fall of 2004 and will offer courses in the New Testament as well as ancient Christianity particularly Byzantine studies. The department welcomes these distinguished new members and is confident their expertise will add to the strength of our program.

Chün-fang Yü, a long time member of the department and chair for the last several years, is retiring at the end of this academic year. Professor Yü joined Rutgers University in 1972 and has played the principal role in developing and strengthening the field of Eastern Religions, particularly Buddhism, in our overall curriculum. She has not only acted as the mainstay in the teaching in that particular area, but also brought religion into the mainstream of the university by taking initiatives in opening inter-disciplinary channels of communication and cooperation with many cognate departments. Our department acted so swiftly after 9/11 to offer a series of teach-ins widely for the benefit of the university community, showing how responsive and relevant religion can be in crisis situations. The department was not only recognized for its contribution but also thanked by many sectors of the university for its timely initiative. The department is indebted to Professor Yü for her unparalleled leadership in all of this. We are profoundly grateful for many years of her dedicated teaching and untiring administrative service not to mention her groundbreaking scholarly accomplishments. Though she is leaving us, Professor Yü is expected to join the graduate faculty of Columbia University in New York where she will devote her time to training future scholars in the field of Buddhism study.

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Hiroshi Obayashi, Chair-Elect

## Edwin F. Bryant

This semester has been a busy one, between settling into a newly purchased house in late August, and preparing all my material for tenure review. I was able and relieved, however, to put the finishing touches to a number of publications that were nearing their terminal stages (these final editorial-related touches are typically the most tedious and time consuming aspects of a project). My translation with Penguin Classics of the Sanskrit text, the 10<sup>th</sup> book of the Bhagavata Purana, has completed the entire editorial process, been typeset, and is now in press and due on the shelves later on in the year. Two co-edited volumes *The Hare Krishna Movement: The Post-Charismatic Fate of a Religious Transplant* and *The Indo-Aryan Controversy: Evidence and Inference in Indian History* have also both been through the editorial process, with Columbia University and Curzon Routledge Presses respectively, and I am awaiting the final typeset proofs for these. I now also have in hand all the papers for a third edited volume, *Sources of the Krishna Tradition*, contracted to Oxford University Press, which I intend to have in the editor's hands by the end of the year. With all these projects more-or-less off my desk, I can now (finally) redirect my focus to the sequel to my first book (*The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture*), entitled *The Quest for the Historical Krishna*, also contracted to Oxford University Press. This monograph has actually always been my original and primary academic project, but it ended up spawning all of the other volumes as by-products, so it will be gratifying to get back to it!



In addition to finishing up these academic publications, I have been lecturing from my ongoing translation of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras on a number of occasions at Yoga conventions across the country. Translating ancient Sanskrit texts is an activity that I find particularly fulfilling, as is lecturing from such primary sources, whether to my students at Rutgers, or to the educated public interested in Indian thought from the greater community. Other than this, I remain busy fixing up the old colonial house that I bought, and getting as many shrubs, trees, and plants into the ground before the end of fall, as I possibly can.

## Alberto R. Green

In response to an imperative need in the field of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, this year my book, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, was published by the University of California, San Diego. My book constitutes Volume 8 in the prestigious **Biblical and Judaic Studies** series. The concept of a "Storm-God" was deeply imbedded within the sociocultural process of ancients since prehistoric times. My research involved an assiduous examination of the plethora of regional studies on religion and cultic practices, the evaluation of relevant archaeological data, and an analysis of pertinent philological and linguistic sources regarding this conceptual development around the Ancient Near East. As a result, I have been able to interpret the ideological, social, and religious significance of the motif of the Storm-God from its emergence, through the multiple phases of its development, and subsequently into this mythical foundation of the modern conception of God. In this investigation, in my attempt to arrive at a new synthesis regarding the place and function of this important deity, I have brought together evidence from the worlds of mythology, archaeology, iconography, and literature. I have arrived at this synthesis by tracing the varying forms and function of the Storm-God motif, and ultimately its impact on both religious and political power in the constantly evolving sociocultural processes throughout the region. I have demonstrated the various stages in its evolution through the Mesopotamian, Anatolian, Syrian, and Levantine regions. In this volume I have been able to demonstrate that functionally and realistically, Yahweh, the God of Israel, was indeed a Storm-god similar to the other deities of this genre around the ancient Near East, however, unlike the others, a number of unique characteristics came to be associated with him.



Last year I was also invited into the membership of the prestigious **Biblical Colloquium West**. This small group of distinguished Biblical scholars meets for two days once every

year at a major university for important presentations by its members. Notable features of these meetings on Biblical Research are an extended seminar style, diverse competencies, intense discussion with spirited interchange during the course of presentations, and an opportunity to see and analyze works in progress. These annual scholarly presentations are subsequently published in book form. In addition to my preparation of papers for erudite gatherings and scholarly journals in my field, I continue my major research and writing on Israel and Transjordan. This will constitute my volume on "Political Developments between the Israelite Omrid Dynasty and the Kingdoms of Edom, Moab, Ammon and Aram" for the **Anchor Bible Reference Library** series.

## James T. Johnson

Alumni of the Department who studied with me will recall that every year I teach two 300-level courses in ethics in the western religious traditions, one on the moral traditions on sexuality and the other on moral traditions related to war and peace. I have research interests and have written on both topics, though most of my research and writing have been on various aspects of the ethics of war (especially the just war and jihad traditions). In the spring of 2003 I was drawn back into research on the Christian tradition on sexuality in a major way, giving an invited paper on the idea of marriage as covenant in early Protestant thought at a large foundation-funded conference at Emory on the topic of "Sex, Marriage, and Family and the Religions of the Book." In the late spring and early summer I refined that paper for inclusion in one of several edited volumes that will come out of this conference. But as usual, most of my research, lecturing, and writing during the last year has been on the subject of the ethics of war and its implications for related issues like human rights and political theory. The large project I am working on is a book on recovering the moral dimension of the idea of national sovereignty, an idea that was essentially lost at the beginning of the modern era. But in the meantime, because of my knowledge of the just war and jihad traditions, I have accepted a number of invitations to lecture and participate in conferences (ten events last spring, seven this fall) occasioned, first, by the 9/11 attacks and, beginning last summer, by the debate over using armed force against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq and then by the Iraq war itself. It's hard to highlight one of these events as against the others, but certainly high on the list would be attending and giving a presentation at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany in September, 2003, in their annual legal conference for NATO and Partnership for Peace nations and doing the same at a conference at Doshisha University in Japan during spring 2004. Finally, during fall 2003 I served as acting departmental chair while Professor Yü was on academic leave—a position that has had the major benefit of putting me in contact with majors I would likely not otherwise ever meet.



## James W. Jones

2002-2003 was a very eventful year for me. My book, *Terror and Transformation: The Ambiguity of Religion*, has provoked discussion in Europe and America and generated invitations from both sides of the Atlantic to lecture on the psychology of religious terrorism. My newest book, on Christianity and Buddhism, is due out this fall from Palgrave



Press. In January my family and I traveled to Sweden where I received an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Uppsala. There was a lot of pageantry as befits one of the oldest Universities in Europe. The ceremony was entirely in Latin. Whereas in the USA when you receive a doctorate you get a robe and a hood, in Uppsala you get a top hat and a ring. And, at the moment they place the hat on your head, a cannon solute is fired off. So there is a loud BOOM as soon as the hat touches your head. I continue to travel to Sweden to teach in a European Union post-graduate program on religion, culture and health in conjunction with Uppsala University and the Karolinska Medical Institute in Stockholm, which enrolls physicians, surgeons

nurses, psychologists, chaplains and other health care professionals from all over Scandinavia. In the summer, in addition to lecturing in Europe on the psychology of religious terrorism, I will also be delivering a paper on religion and health at an international

conference in Scotland. And I continue to maintain a very small private practice in clinical psychology.

## **Tia M. Kolbaba**

I'm the newest member of the department, especially since I will not begin teaching at Rutgers until the fall of 2004. In the meantime, I will be pursuing my research at the Institute for Advanced Study, where I am delighted to have a fellowship for 2003-2004. In spite of my absence, however, the faculty and staff of the Department of Religion have welcomed me with open arms, and I look forward to joining them and contributing to a vital and energetic department.

My current research is on Eastern Orthodox reactions to developments in Roman Catholic theology in the twelfth century. I have worked on other aspects of relations between the eastern and western churches throughout my career, including a book on the most scurrilous Byzantine polemic (*The Byzantine Lists*, University of Illinois Press, 2000) and articles on various other issues (papal primacy, attitudes toward holy war, etc.).

I have taught in history departments for the last ten years—3 years at Colgate University, 7 years at Princeton University. I enjoy teaching and am looking forward to the opportunity and challenge of teaching new courses in the Department of Religion. In addition to teaching the course on the New Testament and early Christianity, I will offer courses on the Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire, the schism between Rome and Constantinople, and the history of Christian monasticism.

And while I enjoy my teaching and research immensely, my greatest joy and delight in life come from my children: Cameron (5 years old) and Elodie (nearly 3). When work and children allow, I also enjoy playing tennis, gardening, and walking my dog. You may occasionally see us wandering the Douglass Campus together; nothing delights her more than a plenitude of squirrels.

## **Jawid Mojaddedi**

I joined the Department of Religion this summer as assistant professor of Islamic Studies. It has been very easy to settle into my new position thanks to the friendly and supportive atmosphere for which this department seems to be already renowned across the university.

The textbook *Classical Islam*, which I co-edited and co-translated, was published this summer, in good time for me to start using it in my teaching. I also completed my translation of the first book of Rumi's *Masnavi*, which is due to be published next summer as an Oxford World's Classics edition. Earlier in 2003, I had published an article on the drunken/sober typology in early Sufism in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. These three most recent publications are representative of my research interests, in that while my area of specialization is Sufism up to the time of Rumi (d. 1273), I am also interested in the main genres of medieval Islamic scholarship in general. My monograph, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism* (Curzon, 2001) is a study of the main genre of Sufi historiography, a biographical genre which is in fact common to all the Islamic intellectual traditions.



I have enjoyed my time at Rutgers so far, and feel privileged to have the opportunity to teach such a diverse, enthusiastic and talented group of students. In addition to courses on Islam and Rumi, I am looking forward to offering courses on Islamic Mysticism, Shiism and Medieval Arabic Religious Texts. Although I have spent most of my life in England, after having moved there from my native Afghanistan when I was a child, I have been based in central New Jersey for the last five years. My wife and I enjoy in particular the ease with which we can travel to New York and take advantage of the cultural attractions there, while living in a relatively calm and relaxed atmosphere.

## Hiroshi Obayashi

For the last 37 years I have taught a wide variety of courses in the department, but none has gained wider attention than "Death and Afterlife." This focus came into being quite by accident during the late 70s as a part of the department's overall effort to bolster its student registration when humanities across the board were losing ground to sciences and more job-related disciplines, thus fighting for survival through the turmoil created by university-wide re-organization. The course proved to be the largest drawing student option in the department. But because of the unconventional and sharply specialized focus, a textbook was not readily available, and I had to come up with a book designed specifically for the course. Since its initial publication in 1993, ***Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religion***, which I edited out of a series of guest lectures, colleges and theological seminaries have adopted it as the textbook for their courses. Including its adoption to my own course, the cumulative sales have topped ten thousand copies. Recently I was asked and wrote an article, "Afterlife: The Christian Concepts," for Macmillan Company as an entry to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of their well-known *Encyclopedia of Religion* due to appear in 2004.



Another of my course offerings, "Religion and Politics," deals with the issue of religious freedom among many foci. It was in this context that I was asked to contribute an essay to ***Encyclopedia of Religious Freedom***, which was published by Routledge Company in the fall of 2003.

## Chün-fang Yü

This has been a very active year for me. I traveled to Asia three times: in December 2002, I attended the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Bangkok. Prior to this meeting, I went to Siem Reap, Cambodia and spent five days studying the Buddhist sculptures of the Angkor Wat complex, built around the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. In July 2003, I attended a conference in Taipei on East Asian Confucianism and participated in the planning for an international research project on East Asian Buddhism. In August 2003 I traveled to Singapore to attend yet another international conference, the 3<sup>rd</sup> conference of Asian scholars held at the National University of Singapore. I then joined colleagues from the university and spent a week studying the Buddhist temples around Yogyakarta, Central Java, concentrating on the Buddhist monument Borobudur, built around the 9<sup>th</sup> century. I was much impressed by the coexistence of Hindu and Buddhist elements in the sculpture and architecture, both in Indonesia and Cambodia. I was the Numata Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School during their spring quarter. I taught a graduate seminar on



Chinese Buddhism. We read Buddhist sutras and treatises focusing on the central theme of "Buddha nature".

# News About Religion Alumni

## Alan Wright (B.A., 2003)

In February of 2002, I left New Jersey for South Africa. Though I had long known my trip would send me to the other side of the globe, it was not until I arrived in Johannesburg that I realized how far I had really come. I would like to share my seven-month experience of living and studying in South Africa with readers of the Newsletter.

I attended the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, studying religion, philosophy, and political science. A long history of British colonialism and imperialism had impacted the culture of South Africa in untold ways, and to this is added the weight of apartheid's racist legacy. I arrived in South Africa less than a decade after the end of apartheid, during the

young adulthood of my university classmates. Many were the stories of its internal violence, as well as the fearful death throes of apartheid's final days.

The perspective of many young South Africans is optimistic, however. Most students with whom I had contact were grateful to have a college education. Since the majority of their countrymen live in grave squalor, these students work hard to put their opportunity to study to productive use. Educated young people, no doubt the future of the professional workforce, provided me with surprising insight into the life of South Africa.



At the University, I had the opportunity to study religion, philosophy, and politics in an interdisciplinary manner. The faculties of the university had consolidated their departments into larger buildings, in part so that faculty could streamline their work, research, meetings, cooperation, and morale. The added benefit is that students in similar disciplines share classroom time in the same building, adding to the experience that religion, history, law, economics, and political science share many common threads. I have been told that the consolidation on the science and agriculture campus creates a similar experience of integration and camaraderie.

One should be careful, however, not to overstate the spirit of togetherness, whether among students or professionals. The culture of South Africa, while economically advantaged compared to its African neighbors, is still largely subject to the divisiveness of racial and cultural misunderstanding. The banking and industrial infrastructure is still largely controlled by white South Africans, who cannot be expected to immediately forgo the biases that have been reaffirmed during apartheid. On the other hand, the government of South Africa is almost entirely led by black South Africans. Each province is represented differently, often by political parties that pay homage to indigenous or tribal ties. Like any society, these rifts are not simple and the interest groups are not monolithic. The deep and perpetual problems of trust and fear, both civilly and politically, persist all the same. In classes and social life, these rifts were normally settled with the diplomacy and tact befitting a public university. More likely, however, students accepted or contributed to *de facto* segregation by ignoring the emotional work that is required to clarify one's mind of bias. While helpful in illuminating these complexities, my studies of philosophy and political science did not ease my mind as to the future for South African society.

In my religion classes, however, my fears were more directly addressed. In order to satisfy the requirements of my major, some of my religion courses were in the Biblical Studies department, and were geared for *believers*. More than simple discussion and analysis of religious doctrine and history, these classes were intended to train Christians to be critical and insightful about their own faith. In this context, I found the discussion of race and history in South Africa to be much more forthright and hopeful. For one, Christians of both races in South Africa understand the problem of faith amid past complicity with apartheid. Among apartheid's critics, much like America's abolitionists, piety and humanism worked together for change. A course on African religions, taught by a Xhosa speaking convert to Islam, brought similar insights into the faithful experience in South Africa.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, post-apartheid South Africa's route to forgiveness, was founded upon the humanist and religious notions of shared suffering and camaraderie. The popularity of TRC Chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela, and the wide endorsement of HIV/ AIDS education programs may provide further evidence of brotherhood. I already knew that Rutgers had prepared me to understand the complexities of political and religious life, but I was left in a lurch, personally and intellectually, when it came to understanding religion as a lived experience. In South Africa, however, the opportunity to study alongside believers and future church leaders was a welcoming and eye-opening change. Far from being simply abstract or academic, I realized that the study of religion provided grave insights into the mechanics of belief, as well as religious communities themselves.

My experience in South Africa helped me to integrate my academic study of religion with fieldwork. When I returned from South Africa during 2002-2003, I took an internship in New York with the Drum Major Institute, a progressive public policy group associated with the legacy of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King. Moreover, I enrolled as a part-time student at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, the oldest Protestant seminary in the United States. At the seminary, studies in Church history and Liberation theology helped me to understand the internal history of Christianity since the Reformation, times replete with historical change and cultural oppression. Similar to my experience as a foreign student in South Africa, being an “outsider” in the seminary brought insight into the importance of external criticism, collaboration between diverse interest groups, as well an understanding of the fruit that may be borne of open civil discourse. I can think of no way other than civil discourse for the United States, or any state, to resolve the problems of cultural and religious conflict. This task is long overdue.

### **Pam Lynn Nickisher (B.A. 2000)**

After graduating I took a year off to work and then entered law school in the fall of 2002. I am currently in my second year at Rutgers Law-Newark. My plans are to pursue a career in public interest law, preferably a position in the public defender’s office working with the juvenile population.

### **Kristina Johnson (B.A. 1994)**

After I graduated from Rutgers, I spent four years working at a group home for deaf and blind adults, who also had other developmental disabilities. Then I moved to Virginia and got a job working for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), where I have remained for the past 4 years. Although I haven’t pursued to further my study of religion, I still find myself referring to my old textbooks and have only good memories of every religion course I took at Rutgers.

### **Barbara A. Ward (B.A. 1979, J.D. 1985, Harvard Law School)**

I have good memories of my time at Rutgers and am happy to see that the Religion Department has flourished. Since 1989, I have worked as a federal prosecutor, first in South Florida and now in New York. My husband, David Rostan, is an employment lawyer in private practice in New Jersey. Our kids, Ben (4) and Rachel (1) keep us focused on the important things in life (for example, karate and stair climbing). Can I get an application for the class of 2020?

### **Judy Nelson Platt (B.A. 1968, M.A. 1969)**

Currently, I am the Resource Center Director at the Presbytery of West Jersey and Director of Christian Education at the Presbyterian Church at Woodbury. I have my M.A. in special education from Glassboro State College and taught public school special education classes prior to raising my children, Joanna (Mason Gross graduate), a sculptor, and Aaron (Geo. Mason University Graduate), Peace Corps Volunteer in Uzbekistan and Daniel, a senior at the College of New Jersey.

## **Religion Honors Projects**

### **Aun H. Ali (RC 2003)**

#### **Henry Rutgers Scholars Program**

Shiite theologians have long held that the essential dogma of Shiism existed during the Prophet Muhammad’s lifetime. This view is rejected by Sunnite Muslims and, until recently, by most Western scholars as well. Inspired by the groundbreaking book *The Succession to Muhammad* by Wilfred Madelung, Laudian Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford, my thesis, “Pro-Shiism,” takes a fresh look at the question of the origin of Shiism. After examining the socio-political roots of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib’s first partisans, I attempted to show that the Qur’an and Muhammad’s



public life confirmed their inclination towards 'Ali. My research combined the perspective of a believer with modern Western scholarship on the subject. I am deeply indebted to my advisors Dr. James Pavlin and Dr. Paul Sprachman for their constant supervision. This project has helped me to redefine my personal and academic goals. At the graduate level I hope to pursue my interest in Shiism, specifically Shiite elegiac poetry.

### **Eric Lybeck (LC 2003)**



This year I completed a thesis entitled "Runes, Vikings, Kings and Christ: Scandinavian Religions from 800 to 1250 C.E." As the title suggests, my project was an examination of religion within the Northern European territories in modern-day Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and Northern England. During the course of my studies at Rutgers in the Religion Department, I have been exposed to the indigenous traditions of North America, Africa and East Asia. Often, the most fascinating material in these courses involved the interaction of the folk beliefs and rituals with those of imported faiths that have been termed World Religions. In the case of Native Americans, for example, the Christian missionaries sent by the Spanish, French, Portuguese, and English encountered a complex and vibrant indigenous belief system, which they attempted to dismantle in their effort to convert the continent. But Europe itself was not Christianized until several centuries into the Common Era. Without the benefit of recent historical records, I set out to learn about the religious landscape present when the European continent was converted to Christianity. Scandinavia offered the best resources since it was one of the last areas in Europe to convert, leaving historians one of the only coherent mythological systems besides the Greco-Roman model of paganism. My research led me to interesting areas of study including Norse mythology and ritual practices, and the Christian conversion, which involved a relatively swift political conversion of kings and earls followed by a gradual, competitive, and often bloody acceptance of Christianity by the lay people. Also of interest was the dramatic shift in the roles of women in religion and society, who in myth and culture went from the status of heroines and leaders to that of virgins and domestics. The history of the period was fascinating and dramatic. It was a culture and period I had very little knowledge of going into my research and I am infinitely grateful for the opportunity I have had to look into an area of religious studies that is often ignored.

### **Alaina M. Morgan (RC 2003) Henry Rutgers Scholars Program**

This past year I completed my Henry Rutgers thesis which explored the connections between Black women and their participation, or lack thereof, in contemporary Wicca (witchcraft). This thesis entitled, "The Many Faces of the Goddess Missing a Black Face: Sociological, Psychological and Political Reflections on the Absence of African-American Women in Contemporary Wicca," traces the absence of Black women to several factors, some of which are more apparent than others. This project, done under the direction of Dr. James W. Jones (who I am completely indebted to for his support), completely transformed the way that I see Black female religion as well as revolutionized the way that I think and analyze information.



### **Walter N. Sisto (RC 2003) Henry Rutgers Scholars Program**

For the past two semesters, I have been working on my Henry Rutgers Thesis, "Perfect Continence: An Apostolic Rule." Under the guidance of my supervisor, Professor James Johnson, I traced the origins of perfect continence or more widely known as celibacy to the Apostles themselves. Thus, severely challenging the claim that celibacy begins only as a canonical rule for the Western Church in the fourth century, a claim that is held by the broader scholarly community. My thesis was the first major research work I have ever



worked on and will certainly not be the last. Although researching my topic was extremely difficult and complicated, it was by far the most rewarding experience of my academic career thus far. After completing my thesis, I now feel well equipped for my future in graduate studies.

**Daniel L. Wyche (LC 2003)**



Over the course of the past two semesters, I worked with Professors Chün-fang Yü and Kenneth Holloway on a thesis which dealt with the key concept of the “Authentic Person” in a classical Chinese religious-philosophical text, the *Zhuangzi*, or *Chuang-tzu*, named after its purported author. Entitled: “The Masters and the Marsh Sparrow: Zhuangzi’s Authentic Person, A Classical Chinese Thinker on Limitation and Possibility at the Pivot of the Way,” my text focused on the way in which Zhuangzi used an unorthodox anecdotal or parablistic style to conjure up humorous and memorable characters to impart his vision of human Authenticity. I argued that for Zhuangzi, the ideal individual reaches authenticity or perfection not by mastering mystic rites or the like, but by coming to grips with his or her own limitations and specific place within the great natural order (*Dao*, or ‘the Way’) and living with those limitations. Ironically, it is in this act of understanding limitation that one is liberated, and given access to the infinite range of creative possibilities that present themselves to a given individual at any time. My work on this project was tedious but extremely rewarding, and in the future I intend to pursue graduate work in the field of religious studies, perhaps focusing on the spaces where the religious, political, and philosophical all link up.

# The Anna I. Morgan Scholarships in Religion

Anna I. Morgan was a lifelong resident of New Brunswick. When she died in the early 1970s, she left a bequest to Douglass College to be used for the benefit of Douglass students interested in the study of religion and careers related in some way to the field of religion. The Morgan Fund supports both undergraduate scholarships and lecture series. Morgan Scholarships are intended for the benefit of students at Douglass College who have taken one or more courses in the Department of Religion. These scholarships are awarded each semester to Douglass students in the sophomore, junior, and senior years that have a cumulative average of at least 3.5 and excel in one or more religion courses. The scholarships range from \$250 to \$2,000 depending upon the student’s financial needs.

Grants are also available to defray the cost of applying to graduate or professional schools related to careers in religion, attending professional meetings in religion or related fields, and buying books and materials necessary to undertake research in Department Honors. Congratulations to the Douglass Students who received Morgan Fund scholarships during the 2002/2003 academic year.

Shpresa	Ahmeti	(2003)	Sarah	Lavine	(2004)
Leah	Anglum	(2005)	Alexandra	Leroy	(2004)
Lindsey	Ayers	(2004)	Wendy	Lertola	(DC)
Marina	Benedetto	(2004)	Gillian	Lyons	(2004)
Kimberly	Biddings	(2004)	Lauren	McCormick	(2006)
Jill	Briggles	(DC)	Susan	Mensa-Kwao	(2006)
Jaclyn	Carus	(2005)	Eva	Mudrak	(2004)
Alanna	Chan	(2004)	Payal	Patel	(2005)
Melissa	Cifelli	(2003)	Sarah	Pomerantz	(2004)
Lauren	Cohen	(2005)	Kathryn	Prettyman	(2004)
Dena	Elmarsafi	(2005)	Kristen	Sager	(2005)
Devon	Eubanks	(2004)	Shirali	Sheth	(DC)
Jennifer	Fiddler	(2007)	Dawn	Sitarski	(2004)
Nitzana	Gertler	(2004)	Maggie	Stewart	(2004)

Sharon	Grau	(2003)	Devika	Swamy	(DC)
Zarain	Hamid	(2005)	Alia	Taqi	(2005)
Jaclyn	Hirschorn	(2004)	Erin	Towner	(2003)
Jessie	Jayaraj	(2004)	Eva	Ware	(2003)
Sana	Khan	(2004)	Genet	Zerai	(2007)

# The Anna I. Morgan Lectures in Religion

The theme for the The Anna I. Morgan Lectures in Religion 2002-2003 was "Globalization and World Religions."

The dominant discourse on globalization celebrates the expansion of global trade, financial markets, the media and transnational corporations that bring new opportunities of growth and technological innovation to people in poor and remote countries. The result, however, is ambiguous. Many countries fail, with the cost of transition falling disproportionately on the poorest in those countries. In addition to economic consequences, there is evidence that political, cultural, religious and ethical dimensions of the process must be taken into account to understand and evaluate the phenomenon of globalization in its various manifestations. The focus of these lectures was twofold: to explore the role that world religions are playing, or might play, in the processes of globalization, and the effects of globalization on world religions.

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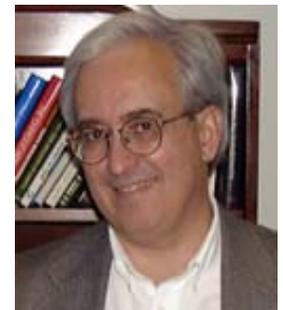


Globalization theories have been invoked to explain the role of religions both as supporters of traditional movements with potential for conflict or as supporters of innovative movements geared to social change, both locally and globally. In the present context, religions play a variety of roles that can be placed between the two extremes of mobilizing backlash reactions against globalization, or advocating and promoting a more just, peaceful and sustainable globalization. There are religious groups that mobilize against the forces of globalization through various forms of nationalism, fundamentalism and ethnic rivalries. On the other hand, there are other religious groups that critically adapt to the process

of globalization using its resources to affect innovative changes to foster a more cooperative global community.

This lecture series aimed to understand the common challenges and opportunities that world religions face today with globalization pressing their national, cultural, and religious identities. With the attacks of September 11, 2001 still fresh in many minds and the relation of religion to terrorism being hotly debated, two of the speakers focused specifically on the question of religion and violence.

On September 12, 2002, Mark Juergensmeyer, Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies at the University of California—Santa Barbara, spoke on "Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence." His talk drew on research into violent religious activism in a variety of contexts, including interviews with individuals convicted for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the Oklahoma City bombing, leaders of Hamas, and abortion clinic bombers. Taking a longer look at the Islamic juristic tradition, on October 29 John Kelsay, Rubenstein Professor of Religion at Florida State University, spoke on "War, Peace, and Justice in Islamic Tradition." Kelsay, author of *Islam and War* and recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship to write a book on the Islamic Law of War, summarized the nature and content of normative Islamic tradition on war, peace, and justice in and among societies, then applied this to the justifications given by



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Osama bin Ladin for the September 11 attacks and concluded with a look at four subsequent critical responses to bin Ladin's argument from contemporary Muslim authorities.

In the spring semester the focus of the series shifted away from violence and war to the growing transnational nature of Buddhism, as Wendy Cadge, then of the Princeton University Center for the Study of Religion and now Assistant Professor of Sociology at Bowdoin College, spoke on March 26 on the topic, "A Global Sangha? The Transnational Nature of Buddhism in America." Cadge drew on both historical and ethnographic evidence to show how Theravada Buddhism, native to South and Southeast Asia, has taken root in the United States and is lived and practiced by immigrant and convert Theravada Buddhists here.

Globalization affects religion around the world in a great variety of ways, some of little importance but others creating significant pressure for change. At the same time the new global nature of the great world religions, which historically flourished in particular areas of the world, has produced not only conflict but also significant nonviolent pressures for change in the societies where these religions have been implanted by immigration and global communication. This initial series of Morgan Lectures looked at globalization and the world religions from three perspectives, but we hope to return to this general theme from other perspectives in future years.

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## Religion Student Association

The Religion Student Association (RSA) and the Baha'i Club co-sponsored an, "Interfaith Dialogue on Peace" on April 14, 2003 in the Rutgers Student Center on the College Avenue Campus. Leaders from the Jewish, Christian, Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim



faiths spoke about interfaith dialogue and the means to reach peace. Although the religious leaders differed in their fundamental teachings, they all reached one conclusion - tolerance of different religious viewpoints can result in peace.

Participants from major religious faiths were: Reverend Ellen Little, Director of the Wesley Foundation at Rutgers (Christianity); David Fricke, Director of Education, New Brunswick Islamic Center (Islam); Dr. M.G. Prasad, Stevens Institute of Technology (Hinduism); Kurt Spellmeyer,

Associate Professor of English at Rutgers and Sensei of Cold Mountain Sangha (Buddhism); and Brad Wilson, Rutgers Graduate Student (Baha'i faith).

The principles of the RSA are to enhance the university community by organizing engaging and often challenging lectures by religious leaders and scholars, to strive toward a depth of conversation and understanding with the terms of religious difference, and to consider related questions regarding personal and group identity, including race, language, nationality, and history. Membership is open to the Rutgers community and the community at large.

Many thanks to Alan Wright, Executive Board Member of the RSA, and to all of the students and speakers who contributed to this very successful event.

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