

Religious Studies

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From the Director

What's she still doing here? A valid question given that I had announced that I would be stepping down from the role of Director of the Religious Studies Program at the end of my June 2009 to May 2012 appointment. As it turned out, late in the game, however, our incoming nominee for the position, Andy Buckser, was given the opportunity to serve CLA as Director of Research instead. Best wishes to Andy; and I hope I have your good wishes as my directorship is extended one more year. (This really will be my last year, though, because I plan on being on sabbatical just a fraction of 2013-2014.) I am committed to maintaining the strength of the program, which you will see exhibited in the newsletter.



Angelica Duran
Associate Professor-English and
Comparative Literature
Director, Religious Studies

You will also see from some of the announcements that the Religious Studies Program has great thanks to give to the Interdisciplinary Studies administrative team of JoAnn Miller and Delayne Graham; to our previous Academic Advisor Dennis Bowling; to the faculty who teach the courses for our majors, minors, and really the large number of undergraduates from all over campus; from various campus organizations and individuals who contributed to the great success of the resurrection of the student organization, the Society for Religious Studies; and to the RS Steering Committee for their valuable work:

- Andrew Buckser (ANTH)
- Darren Dochuk (HIST)
- Paul Draper (PHIL)
- Jacqueline Marina (PHIL)
- Donald Mitchell (PHIL)
- Thomas Ryba (PHIL)
- Daniel Smith (PHIL)

We say good-bye for the second year in a row to the Steering Committee member from the History Department: last year, Michael Ryan, as he moved on to the warmer pastures at the University of New Mexico; this year Darren Dochuck, as he moves on to the colder pastures at Washington University in St. Louis. To ensure the Program's truly interdisciplinary nature, I ask any faculty member interested in serving this worthy Program to contact me: I think you will find it to be a highly rewarding, relatively low impact, and definitely an enjoyable experience.

Finally, I hope everyone reading this newsletter will contact me whenever they have a question or idea that can contribute the important work of the Religious Studies Program; and I hope to see you come out for the 2012-2013 events that are listed in our "In Prospect" section and that will be announced on the Program's e-distribution list.

Sincerely,
Angelica Duran
<duran0@purdue.edu>, (765) 496-3957

SRS: Alive and Kicking in 2011-2012!

By Jacqueline Cassutt, SRS member, Class of 2012 (Linguistics, Asian Studies, English)

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his year, the student organization the Society for Religious Studies (SRS) was resurrected and immediately set to collaborating with the Purdue Religious Studies Program. In Autumn 2011, they co-hosted the annual Religious Studies Program “Meet, Great, and Eat” at the home of Director Angelica Duran. Then, in Spring 2012, they spearheaded the highly successful “2 Days, 5 Faiths” tent at Purdue’s Spring Fest/Bug Bowl, the annual community event that hosts over 40,000 students, families, communities members, and visitors in the span of two days, this



year April 14-15. The project – a brainchild in Autumn 2011 of SRS President Jessie DeWeese and Treasurer Anne Charlton – started for student-members but bloomed into participation by SRS members; Religious Studies Program instructors, including the indefatigable Stuart Robertson, who brought his brother Bruce along for good measure; the Unitarian Universalist community, who contributed to lovely quilt-banner that graced the tent’s entryway; St. Thomas Aquinas’s Purdue Catholic Students; Muslim Student Association; Latino Cultural Center; WL Buddhist Study Group; and Congress Street Church. We were able to pay for it all through small grants from the “Diversity Action Committee” and “PSG: Cash for Collaboration,” financial contributions from SRS

and the Religious Studies Program, and free bagels from Einstein Bros. Bagels. Spring 2012 SRS President Anne Charlton and Treasurer J. Case Tompkins deserve a round of applause for closing up the important paperwork in due time.

We had a busy spot, next to the ever-popular cricket-spitting contest. Activities and displays related to the five major religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were cycled throughout the day by religion. For Christianity, Latino Cultural Center’s Day of the Dead (*Día de los Muertos*) altar ignited discussions of the mixing of culture and religion (and the children liked to play with the skeleton under the display). During the Buddhist display, the singing bowl was a big hit. Used by monks for religious purposes, the bowl hums and vibrates when someone correctly circumvents it with a small club. Almost magical, the bowl was passed along children and adults alike.

We ran out of some supplies for the crafts (but of course were able to stock up for the next day), for rosary decade bracelets (Christianity); honey-bee sticks with googly eyes (Islam), prayer flags (Buddhism), and others. Winners of the “King James Bible Jeopardy,” “Buddhism Jeopardy,” and “Islam Jeopardy” were especially happy with the valuable prize of a t-shirt with PURDUE written in the five language representing the five major religions which the volunteers were given for free as keepsakes. All of these presentations provided fun and education for volunteers and viewers alike.

New Teaching Initiatives

In Autumn 2011, the Religious Studies Program sponsored its first course in the Honors Program, which will be the Honors College starting Autumn 2012. Stuart Robertson was the instructor for “The Evolution of the Bible and Its Revolutionary Effects.” Students toured Purdue’s own “Bruce Rogers Special Collections,” comprised of half the collection Purdue alum and book-maker Bruce Rogers, of books and ephemera – the U.S. Library of Congress houses the other half of this impressive collection. Complementing their course discussions and reading were also an all-day field trip to the biblical collection of the Chicago Newberry Library and the Twin Rockers Handmade Paper site in Brookston, Indiana. The course also benefitted from the public lectures focused on the King James Bible cited in the “In Retrospect” section.

This 2011-12 academic school-year also saw the successful proposal of the first course that the Religious Studies Program is sponsoring for Purdue’s highly successful Learning Communities program, coordinated by the Student Access, Transition, and Success Program, which provides incoming students with the opportunity to be grouped with 20-30 other first-year students to take two to three of the same specially-designed courses together. The core course for the inaugural Autumn 2012 “Around the World (in 1 Semester and 5 Religions)” Learning Community (AtW LC) is a 25-student section of “REL200: Introduction to Religious Studies.” REL200 Instructor LaReina Hingson (COMM) will use the same syllabus designed by RS Director Angelica Duran, who will be teaching the regular 80-student “REL200” that same semester. The second course for Autumn 2012 is “ENGL264: The Bible as Literature,” with Angelica Duran acting as the instructor. Instructor and students, please consider what “second course” the AtW LC can or should offer for Autumn 2013. We anticipate it will be a huge success, as the Autumn 2012 courses filled up immediately.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Con-GRAD-ulations!

In the 2011-2012 academic year, the Program averaged about 65 Religious Studies majors and minors. A hearty congratulations to our 23 newly-minted Boilermaker alums:

Majors

Nathan Brooks
John D'Allesandro
Jessie DeWeese
Sean Goda
Patrick Hagmaier
Hans Herrin
Benjamin Teninty

Minors

Karisa Baker
Rachel Baughman
Brian Beney
Josh Bohm
Susan Breeden
Mark Burdick
Anne Charlton

Nicholas Dominy
Brian Ehlich
Christopher Endress
Matthew Hartsock
Casey Krauter
Gregory Krawciw
Marie Macher

Kaitlyn Sims
Isabelle Sumera

Something from our Academic Advising

By Dennis Bowling

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am very happy to announce that Yu-Ra Jung started as the new academic advisor for Religious Studies in Spring 2012. Yu-Ra earned a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Studies and Mass Communication and two Masters' Degrees in Mass Communication from Korea, and the second in Museum Studies at the George Washington University. In addition, she has also spent two semesters studying conflict management at the Institute of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. Please see Yu-Ra to develop and implement an individualized plan for academic and career success and to interpret Purdue and college, department, and/or school requirements, policies, and procedures. Yu-Ra will be a great resource for students and faculty alike. As I move on to my role as CLA Assistant Dean for Student Services, I look back happily on my 10 years working with Philosophy and Religious Studies students and faculty. I wish you the best in your future endeavors.

In Retrospect

Autumn 2011 concluded the year-long activities on campus and around the world commemorating the 400-year anniversary of the King James Bible in 1611. More than 150 audience-members listened to the two such lectures co-sponsored by the Religious Studies Program:

- the keynote lecture at the Purdue Renaissance Comparative Prose Conference – co-sponsored with the Programs in Comparative Literature and Medieval and Renaissance Studies – on September 23, "A Voice Crying in the Wilderness: The King James Bible and Native America" by Scott Stevens (Chicago Newberry Library-Indigenous Studies Center);



- the 4th Annual Larry Axel Memorial Lecture in Religion – co-sponsored with the Jewish Studies Program – on October 4, "The King James Bible and the U.S. Populace" by Mark Noll (Notre Dame-History).

Not to worry: Anglo-Protestantism did not overshadow the other religions showcased through public lectures and other events in the 2011-12 school-year, as you can see by checking out our Program's "Past Events" webpage at

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/religious_studies/events/past_events.html>

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In Prospect

Just as events and lectures clustered around the King James Bible in 2011, in this 2012-2013 academic year, a number of events seem to be clustered around what can be categorized as “Religious Transcendence and Secular Objectivity” – with an important emphasis on that encompassing *and* (not *versus*). Some of the Autumn 2012 events listed below are the results of Autumn 2011-Spring 2012 scholarly research.

To highlight just a few of our Religious Studies affiliated faculty, and the generous funding they earned to carry out their important work...

- Michael Bergmann and Patrick Kain (PHIL) are in the middle of a three-year \$550,000 project entitled “Knowing in Religion and Morality,” funded by the John Templeton Foundation, with support from Purdue University. The project has four main components: (i) a monograph written by Bergmann, (ii) a 2011 summer seminar led by Bergmann for junior faculty and advanced graduate students, (iii) an interdisciplinary conference at Purdue (September 6-8, 2012; see below) co-organized by Bergmann and Kain, and (iv) a volume co-edited by Bergmann and Kain that collects together the papers from the 2012 conference.
- Last year, Paul Draper (PHIL) had a Skeptical Theism Fellowship at the University of Notre Dame's Center for Philosophy of Religion. "Skeptical theism" is a technical term he coined in a 1996 article called "The Skeptical Theist," to refer to what has become the most popular approach to defending theists against the charge that they face a devastating evidential problem because theism cannot explain the horrific suffering and other evils in the world. The basic idea is that we should be skeptical about our ability to judge what God would be likely to do or what reasons God might have for allowing horrific evils to occur and so we should not take those evils to be serious evidence against God's existence. While at the Center, Draper completed six articles, two of which were on skeptical theism, arguing that skeptical theism fails to solve the so-called "evidential problem of evil."
- August 26 - October 6, Display at the Hicks Undergraduate Library
“Rewriting the Book of Nature: Charles Darwin and the Rise of Evolutionary Theory”
Purdue has partnered with the U.S. National Library of Medicine on the exhibit, just over 150 years since Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*. Associated lectures and presentations are still in the works in Hicks. So far...
 - * Andrew DeWoody, “The Discovery of Vertebrate Genes Underlying Traits of Evolutionary Interest”
Tuesday, September 4, 7:00 p.m.
 - * Paul Draper, “Darwin on Religion”
Tuesday, September 25, 7:00 p.m.
 - * Michael Bergmann, “Could Darwinian Natural Selection Be Divinely Guided?”
Wednesday, October 3, 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, September 1; noon-2:00 p.m.; West Lafayette Morton Center
Annual Religious Studies Program’s “Meet, Greet, and Eat”
Look for the outdoor bench at the Greater Lafayette’s annual GlobalFest. Stop by to catch up on colleagues’ and students’ happenings, and to pick up free appetizers representing each of the 5 major religions.
Sponsor: Religious Studies Program
- Thursday-Saturday, September 6-8; Stewart 214; see <<http://www.knowinginreligionandmorality.com/conference.html>> for times
“Challenges to Religious and Moral Belief: Disagreement and Evolution”
Sponsor: Professors Michael Bergmann and Patrick Kain (Phil), John Templeton Grant
The conference focuses on the following three worries about religious and moral belief: widespread interpersonal disagreement among intellectual peers on religious and on moral topics provides reason to doubt these beliefs; belief-source disagreement on moral issues between commonsense moral intuitions and religious belief sources raises doubts about both methods of belief formation; evolutionary accounts of the origins of our religious and moral beliefs create doubts about these beliefs by undermining our confidence in the reliability of their sources.
For more information about the conference, see: www.knowinginreligionandmorality.com/conference.html.
- Monday, October 22; Krannert Auditorium; 8:00 p.m.
“5th Annual Larry Axel Memorial Lecture in Religion”
Lecture title TBA, Kenneth Seeskin (Phil, Northwestern)
Sponsors: Jewish Studies and Religious Studies Programs

Please regularly check our Program’s “Current Events” webpage, <<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/religious-studies/events/index.html>>, or ask to be added to the e-distribution list to keep up-to-date with the always-exciting happenings.

Nominations ...

Letters of nomination and self-nominating from Purdue-West Lafayette faculty are currently being accepted for the position of *Director of the Religious Studies Program* for the period June 1, 2013- May 30, 2016. Letters should be emailed as attachments to IDIS Administrative Assistant Delayne Graham at <dkgraham@purdue.edu> or campus-mailed to Delayne Graham/IDIS/BRNG. For more information about the position, please contact Angelica Duran or any of the Steering Committee members.

The student group, the Society for Religious Studies, is in desperate need for a faculty or staff member to act as its advisor. This position can be as low-impact or as active as the advisor wants -- and we are pretty sure you get very good karma as a result. In any case, please nominate or self-nominate someone, or ask any questions you may have, as soon as possible by contacting Angelica Duran, <duran0@purdue.edu>.

Purdue-gift

Online giving to Purdue

It is now even easier to donate to the Interdisciplinary Studies Programs using *Purdue-gift*. *Purdue-gift* makes it simple to make a gift by credit card to Purdue. Go to the following web address:

http://www.purdue.edu/UDO/pages/how_to/egift.html

Click on "Make a Gift", choose "Other" from a drop-down menu, then type in "Religious Studies", enter some information about yourself, submit your payment information, and the transaction is completed through Purdue's secure server. Make your gift now in three easy steps. It takes just a few minutes.