Sarah Fitoussi is the inaugural recipient of the Alumni Undergraduate Award. In Fall 2013, the Alumni Board began campaigning to establish the first endowed scholarship award for a religious studies major. Our board members generously pledged $25,000, and at the end of spring 2014 they established the scholarship, which recognizes outstanding student work and will help relieve some of the financial demands for a promising major.

Sarah is a full-time student, wife, and part-time administrator for Marietta Vineyard Church. She earned her BA in Religious Studies in the summer of 2016 with a minor in Sociology. As part of the 4+1 Dual Enrollment Program, Sarah will enter the Religious Studies MA program and will teach a section of RELS 2001: Introduction to World Religions. Sarah writes: “GSU is a great school and I am honored to be a part of their graduate student body in the fall!”

Email Dr. McClymond if you would like to join the Alumni board at kmcclymond@gsu.edu

ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Heather Abraham (BA ‘07, MA ‘08)
David Dreyer (BA ‘01)
Ndola Owuo-Hagood (BA ‘05, ‘08, MA ‘10)

Grene Baranco (BA ‘04)
Justin Howell (BA ‘97, MEd ‘03)
Amna Shirazi (BA ‘97, JD ‘00)

Suzanne Degnats (MA ‘13)
Derek Jackson (BA ‘97)
As I write this, the headlines are filled with news about violence both in the U.S. and overseas, characterized by divisions based on race, class, and religion. Rep. John Lewis writes that he sometimes feels “we’re sliding backwards,” and Muslim friends tell me they are weary of explaining that not all Muslims are terrorists. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed with how much work is left to do to tear down prejudice and stereotypes that divide us from one another.

This is when I am most committed to religious studies education. Sure, we offer lots of fun events, and I hope that students enjoy our classes (and Pizza Tuesdays!). But for me, the goal is serious. My goal is for every religious studies student to develop a deep appreciation for the vast diversity of worldviews, ethical values, cultural practices, textual traditions, historical contributions, and spiritual aspirations we find across the globe – or just around the corner. Just as importantly, my goal is for each student to see this diversity not as a personal threat, but as an opportunity to think critically about how she wants to position herself within this diverse world. Who am I ethically? culturally? spiritually? How can I engage constructively with the myriad of worldviews represented in my classroom, let alone in my world? Can I understand people who differ radically from me, and still function effectively as a community member with those people, moving forward for the benefit of everyone in our community? Can I be articulate enough to share my deepest convictions, and can I be courageous enough to open myself up to new thinking? Can I be a citizen of the world driven not by fear or prejudice or anger, but by thoughtfulness and respect?

Religious studies, at its best, produces graduates who are not naïve about the world (or about religion itself), but who are also not fearful of difference. They are comfortable navigating multicultural contexts in their work places, their politics, and their day-to-day social interactions. I’m proud that we’ve taught them a lot about different religions, but mostly I’m proud that we teach them to embrace and thrive in a variegated social landscape. I honestly believe that the world is a better place for that effort.

In peace,

Kathryn
In the spring, Dr. Bassett presented new research on Aztec bundles as organizing principles at the University of Texas and at the Latin American Studies Association’s international conference in Nashville, TN. These papers will form her second book, an investigation into the roles of bundling and bundles in Aztec understandings of flora, fauna, and landscape.

Fred Ho. It also examines the work of Asian American men in hip hop and Asian American women in higher education.

Finally, Dr. Esaki got married in August. Congratulations, Brett!

Monique Moultrie
Associate Professor
mmoultrie@gsu.edu

Dr. Moultrie received a Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning Summer Grant to revise her Introduction to World Religions course. Also in Fall 2016, she will present her research at the Association of Black Sexologists and Clinicians (September 2016), the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (October 2016), and at Harvard Divinity School (November 2016).

Dr. Herman’s article “The One Gave Birth to the Two: Revisiting Martin Buber’s Encounters with Chinese Religion” was published this fall in the Journal of the American Academy of Religion online.

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ENFOLDING SILENCE
The Transformation of Japanese American Religion and Art under Oppression
BRETT J. ESAKI

“...utilizes innovative methods to decode silence including notation from dance, sign language, and music...”
- Oxford University Press

Available now!

AUGUST

22 Fall semester begins

SEPTEMBER

1 Student Organization Fair with the Religious Studies Student Forum (RSSF) at Hurt Park

5 Labor Day (University Closed)

13 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
“Environmental and Cultural Sustainability” with Dr. Brett Esaki

20 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
RSSF presents “Hell: Its Past, Present, and Future” with Dr. Andrew Altman, GSU Philosophy

27 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
RSSF presents “Making Interfaith Families Work” with Rabbi Malka Packer

OCTOBER

4 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
“Sikhism 101” with Gogi Basi, Sikh Community representative

Book Discussion with Dr. Monique Moultrie

11 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM

18 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
Spotlight on Graduate Student Research - Brandon Render, Organizer

24 World Religions Carnival Day

Spring 2017 Course Registration

25 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
“How to turn your personal story into ‘real’ scholarship” with Dr. Jon Herman

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Location: The Multicultural Center, Suite 206, Student Center

The Multicultural Center hosts scheduled conversations with Georgia State faculty about their published works that focus on a diversity-related topic. Dr. Moultrie will discuss her upcoming project “Leading from the Margins: The Everyday Faith Activism of Black Lesbian Religious Leaders.”

For more information, contact: Lacie Adams, ladams25@gsu.edu

“Applying to Graduate Programs”
Location: Conference room, 1711
Learn valuable information on applying to seminary and PhD programs.
NOVEMBER

1  Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
   RSSF presents Dr. Edward Queen,
   Emory University

8  Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
   “Religion and Science” with
   Dr. David Bell

15 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM
   “Moral Injury Research” with
   Dr. Kathryn McClymond

19-22 AAR 2016 Annual Meeting
   San Antonio, Texas
   www.aarweb.org

21-25 Thanksgiving Break
   (University Closed)

29 Pizza Tuesday - 12:20 PM

DECEMBER

5 Fall Semester Ends

6-13 Final Exams Week

14 FALL 2016
   COMMENCEMENT
   Georgia Dome
   12:30 PM

19-31 Winter Break
   (University Closed)

Spring 2017 Semester begins Monday,
   January 9, 2017

WORLD RELIGIONS
CARNIVAL DAY

The Department is hosting a “World Religions Carnival Day” where you can learn about different religious holidays, foods, traditions, and contemporary issues. Enjoy tasty treats and live entertainment, stroll through the carnival “boardwalk” to play games and win prizes, learn about the student religious groups on GSU’s campus, and find out how religion plays a role in your day-to-day life without you even knowing it.

Stop by anytime between 10:00 and 3:00, and follow us at #worldreligionscarnival and @GSUReligion

Oct. 24th
Register for
Spring classes
The Religious Studies Student Forum (RSSF) is a student run organization that aims to be a bridge between the Religious Studies department and Georgia State’s students. RSSF fosters this connection through events that present scholarly perspectives on interesting topics related to religion. Additionally, RSSF is interested in creating fun and new events that will attract new students into thinking about and working with religion. Having a variety of voices helps us create diverse, interesting programming and events. If you would like to join or find out more about RSSF, contact us or find us on OrgSync, https://orgsync.com/23830/chapter.

RSSF OFFICERS

Madeline Oppenheim
RSSF President
moppenheim1@student.gsu.edu

Leo Paskell
RSSF Vice President
lpaskell1@student.gsu.edu

Christopher Bellow
RSSF Secretary
cbellow1@student.gsu.edu

Emily Higgins
RSSF Treasurer
ehiggins5@student.gsu.edu

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Graduate student Courtney Benshoof earned the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award. This award is given to one or more graduate students who have exhibited excellence in teaching. Courtney also earned her MA in Religious Studies, Summer 2016.

Graduate student Yvonne Candelario earned the Certificate of Excellence in College Teaching through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT). The Certificate of Excellence in College Teaching provides a common framework through which Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) might move beyond basic competence and document their excellent work in teaching and promoting student learning. GTAs who demonstrate and exceed the standards of CELT, are eligible to receive the Certificate of Excellence in College Teaching. Yvonne also earned her MA in Religious Studies, Spring 2016.

Graduate student Ameer Muhammad was selected as a 2016-17 Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities & Colleges award recipient from Georgia State University. The Who’s Who program awards nominees who are selected based on GPA, participation and leadership within school organization and extracurricular activities, community involvement, etc. Ameer earned his MA in Religious Studies, Spring 2016.

Graduate student Clare Van Holm earned the Outstanding Graduate Student Award. This award is given to one or more graduate students who have exhibited excellence in their academic work and department life. Clare also earned her MA in Religious Studies, Spring 2016.
CONGRATULATIONS

CLASS of 2016

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Lauren Cooper (MA ’16) accepted a Visiting Instructor position here in the department for the 2016-17 academic year. Lauren will teach Perspectives 2001 and Rels 2001.

Katie D’Entremont (MA ’16) accepted a teaching position at the University of West Georgia. Katie will be teaching World Religions this fall.

Amna Shirazi (BA ’97, JD ’00) is a recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Alumni Award for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Betty Woodman (MA ’03 and former Alumni Board Member) accepted a full-time, one-year position at the University of Maine in Orono. She writes, “I have good contacts now with both the Business School -- the location for the one year assignment -- and the Humanities (UMaine/Augusta), which needs ongoing support for Women’s Studies, Philosophy/Ethics, American Studies, and... Religious Studies!”

Ed Van Herik’s (MA ’16) article “A Fresh Look on Treating Moral Injury” was featured in Sacred Matters emagazine, May 2016. Ed is currently pursuing a PhD in Communication at Georgia State.

Clare Van Holm (MA ’16) accepted a Visiting Instructor position here in the department for the 2016-17 academic year. Clare will teach Perspectives 2001 and Rels 2001.

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Faith Emmanuel
Sarah Fitoussi
Kariemah Gibson
Sara Maxi Howel
Tanya Kearns
Adam Kennedy
Matthew King
Andrew Lee
Brandon Logan
Christopher McCaskill
Chad Moore
Irene Rivera
Paul Sammons
Erik Vance

MASTER OF ARTS

Courtney Benshoof
Yvonne Candelario
Lauren Cooper
Katie D’Entremont
Bertha Harris
Joyce Kane
Ameer Muhammad
Ed Van Herik
Clare Van Holm
FINANCIAL GIFTS:

- Increase our undergraduate scholarship award amount
- Enhance public programming
- Make unique educational experiences possible, such as student research opportunities, the Religion and Public Life Fellow Program, etc.
- Support faculty research and public presentations of their scholarship

For more information and ways to give, please visit our website and click on Alumni and Friends.

www.gsu.edu/religion
404.413.6100