

Religious Studies

FALL 2014

Dr. Brett Esaki joins GSU!

We are delighted to announce that Dr. Brett Esaki (Ph.D. '12, UC Santa Barbara) has joined the Department of Religious Studies faculty beginning in Fall semester of 2014. Dr. Esaki writes, "I am an ethnographer of Asian American and African American religions, focusing on historic and contemporary transformations of American religion through artistic exchanges between ethnic groups. I examine these exchanges to create thick descriptions of social structures, which reveal the development of selfhood and community under oppression, the experience of religious practice, and the hybridization of religions such as Buddhism, Christianity indigenous religions, and contemporary spirituality." We anticipate that Dr. Esaki will offer courses in American religions; religion & ethnicity; Asian religions; religion and the arts; religion and popular culture; religion, race and sexuality; and American experiences of migration. We also look forward to Dr. Esaki's contributions to our growing religion and public life program.

His most recent publication is "Multidimensional Silence, Spirituality, and the Japanese American Art of Gardening," in the **Journal of Asian American Studies** vol. 16, no. 3 (October 2013).

Welcome, Dr. Esaki!



new

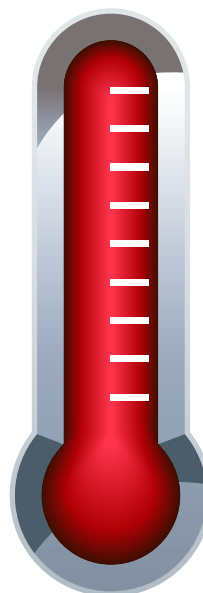
M.A. with concentration in NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT

Many students who have taken Religious Studies courses express interest in a career in non-profit work or with faith-based organizations. The new 2-year MA in Religious Studies with a concentration in Nonprofit Management combines coursework in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies with a program in cultural studies offered by the Department of Religious Studies, including internship experience. Students will develop expertise in both nonprofit management skills and diverse religious and cultural systems that will prepare them for employment in metropolitan Atlanta as well as in national and international nonprofit organizations.

Find out more about our MA degrees on our webpage, or contact Dr. Molly Bassett at mbassett@gsu.edu.

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

ENDOWMENT GOAL REACHED
--but keep contributions coming!



At the end of the spring 2014 semester, we met our goal of raising a minimum of \$25,000 to establish our first undergraduate scholarship. We could not have achieved this goal without your support. You can increase the amount we can give to a deserving undergraduate by continuing to contribute to this fund. For more information on how to contribute to this fund, please contact Dr. Kathryn McClymond at kmcclymond@gsu.edu.

Welcome from the Chair



I'm well-known for emphasizing how much the Department of Religious Studies draws on the resources of Atlanta, and how much our students, alumni, and faculty contribute to the metro Atlanta area. Our students volunteer, intern, study, and work throughout the city, and most of them remain in the greater metropolitan Atlanta area after graduation. They contribute to our area's economic, social, cultural, intellectual, political, aesthetic, and religious vitality, and we're proud of our contribution to their "cizenry." Our faculty are active as well, offering their expertise, their time, and their energy to numerous projects throughout the city and state. Some of this is directly related to their professional research, but some of their effort speaks to a deep commitment to this city as our home.

This summer, however, I've also become increasingly proud of how far our reach extends beyond Atlanta. In Summer 2014 we had faculty members scattered around the country and around the globe, travelling to Lebanon, Rome, France, Scotland, Turkey and Kuwait. Within the U.S., faculty members traveled literally across the country, and this fall Dr. Moultrie will be on leave in Boston as a result of receiving an NEH Fellowship. Our summer students explored religious communities in Atlanta and interned with CARE, but I also visited with alumni who have been working in Korea, Burma, South Korea, and Mongolia. The sun never sets on GSU Department of Religious Studies alumni!

Our academic programming keeps this local-international balance in mind. This fall, in addition to offering our Ph.D. preparatory M.A. program and our course intensive M.A. program, we are launching our M.A. with a Concentration in Non-Profit Management. We anticipate that students who take advantage of this program will eventually use their training to benefit local Atlantans as well as communities on the other side of the globe. In addition, we welcome our new tenure-track faculty member, Dr. Brett Esaki (UC Santa Barbara), who studies religion in America in all its diversity.

We encourage you to join us! Alumni and community friends frequently partner with individual faculty members in their research, serve on our Alumni Advisory Board, and collaborate with us to offer special events and lectures to our students and the broader community. The possibilities are endless! Happy Fall 2014!

Kathryn McClymond
Professor & Chair, Department of Religious Studies

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FOLLOW US!



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Molly Bassett: Dr. Bassett's article "Wrapped in Cloth, Clothed in Skins: Aztec Tlaquimilolli (Sacred Bundles) and Deity Embodiment" appeared in the May issue of **History of Religions**. In June, she attended the first session of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning's 2013-2014 Colloquy on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.



Nadia Latif: Dr. Latif spent part of the summer conducting field research in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon for two separate projects: 1) the role played by religion in the everyday lives of three generations of Palestinian refugees; and 2) the impact on the Palestinian refugee community of thousands of refugees from Syria seeking shelter in Palestinian camps. She spent the rest of the summer working on a book manuscript based on field research she has been conducting on the same camp since 2003 regarding intergenerational narratives of home.



Monique Moultrie: Dr. Monique Moultrie is on research leave for the 2014-2015 academic year. Please see page 4 for details.

Louis Ruprecht: Dr. Ruprecht worked on a new book project at the Vatican Library in June, where he completed a book-length translation project on which he has been working for many years; the book is

currently being reviewed by two university presses. From July 4 through August 8 he taught summer school in Madrid under the auspices of Georgia's European Council. He offered two seminars: "Introduction to Religion" and "Religion and Human Sexuality." Four essays have recently been accepted for publication: they include: "The People Versus the Powers, or, On Money and Speech: The Continuing Saga of Campaign Finance Reform"; "Religion, Classical Utopias and the French Revolution: The Strange Career of a Revolutionary Classicist in the Stranger Course of a French Revolution Classical Utopias and the French Revolution"; "Myths of the Academy: Greek Studies as a Form of Humanistic Enquiry"; and "Southern Landscapes: Tragedy and Redemption, Tragedy as Redemption."



Nicole Tilford: Dr. Tilford's article "The Ark in Space: Battlestar Galactica and Other Seed Ships," was featured on the Noah's Flood: Ancient Stories of Natural Cataclysm blog in the spring 2014. The article can be found at <http://www.floodofnoah.com/#!culture-ark-in-space/cma0>. In addition, Dr. Tilford's forthcoming publication "Evil Eye" will be released late 2014 in **Oxford Bibliographies in Biblical Studies** by Oxford University Press.



SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 19

12:00 PM

PIZZA FRIDAY

Location: Religious Studies
department

OCTOBER 17

12:00 PM

PIZZA FRIDAY

Location: Religious Studies
department

OCTOBER 18

RELIGIOUS STUDIES POTLUCK

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Location: The home of
Dr. Kathryn McClymond

NOVEMBER 14

12:00 PM

PIZZA FRIDAY

Location: Religious Studies
department

NOVEMBER 20

"RELIGION & CORPORATIONS:
A GUIDED DISCUSSION WITH
THE BARANCOS"

11:00 A.M. - 12:15 PM

Location: TBA

NOVEMBER 22-25

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
RELIGION (AAR)
ANNUAL MEETING
SAN DIEGO, CA

www.aarweb.org/annualmeeting

NOVEMBER 24-29

THANKSGIVING BREAK

No classes!

DECEMBER 5

12:00 PM

PIZZA FRIDAY

Location: Religious Studies
department

Dr. Monique Moultrie receives Ford Foundation Fellowship

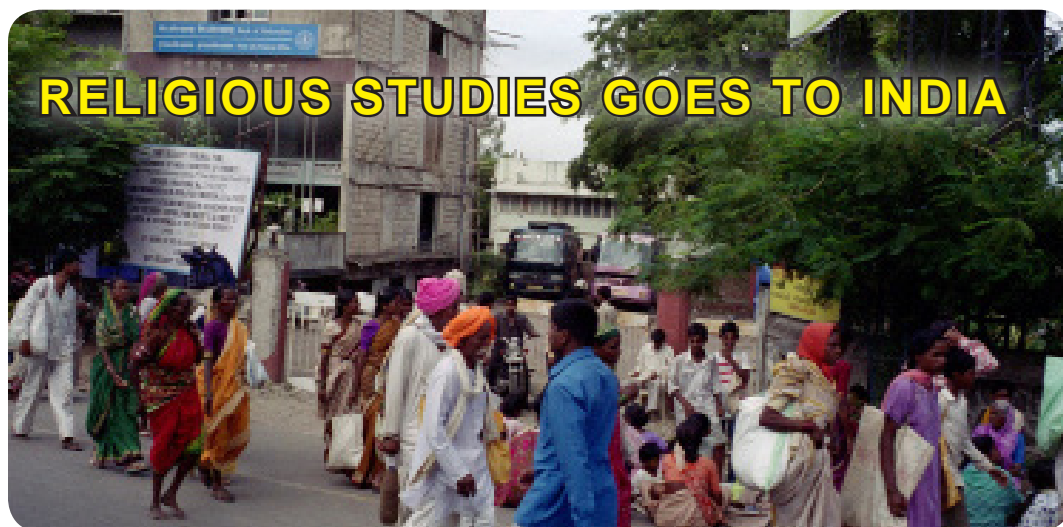


The GSU Department of Religious Studies is delighted to announce that Dr. Monique Moultrie has been selected as an awardee in the Ford Foundation 2014 Postdoctoral Fellowship Competition. She will spend the 2014-2015 academic year at Harvard University. Dr. Moultrie's proposed research project is a book manuscript focused on African American televangelism and women's sexual agency.

This fellowship is sponsored by the Ford Foundation and administered by the National Research Council of the National Academies. Her selection for this prestigious award reflects Ford review panelists' judgment of her scholarly promise for future achievement as a scholar, researcher, and teacher in an institution of higher education. The Ford

Foundation seeks to increase the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students.

Dr. Moultrie is one of 24 postdoctoral fellows chosen for this fellowship. Dr. Marla Frederick, Professor of African and African American Studies and the Study of Religion, will be her host mentor. Congratulations, Dr. Moultrie!



Dr. McClymond, along with Dr. Rashid Naim (Political Science) and Dr. Ghulam Nadri (History) is offering a study abroad trip to India this fall as part of an innovative Study Abroad Minimester model. Currently, students are enrolled in three Minimester I classes focused on Indian religion, politics and history. These classes will wrap up in mid-October. At that point the students will fly to India, where the three faculty members will take turns escorting them for seven weeks to Delhi, Jaipur, Agra, Aligarh, Lucknow, Bodh Gaya, Varanasi, Rajgir, and Kolkatta. While in India, the students will meet with Indian political leaders, religious leaders, and academics, offering different perspectives on Indian culture.

Watch for the students' postings via Facebook and Twitter beginning in mid-October!

Juanita and Greg Baranco selected as the 2014-15 Religion and Public Life Fellows



The Department of Religious Studies is pleased to announce that Juanita and Gregory Baranco, co-owners of Mercedes-Benz of Buckhead and smart center Buckhead, will serve as the Religion and Public Life Fellows for 2014-15. Mr. and Mrs. Baranco are highly successful business leaders in the Atlanta community, and they have offered years of service to numerous state and local government offices, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations in Atlanta and Georgia.

Mr. and Mrs. Baranco both grew up and attended college in Louisiana. According to the Atlanta Business Chronicle, Greg Baranco's work in the automobile industry began when he was a teenager, as an "outside salesman" -- at that time African-Americans weren't permitted to sell inside the dealership. Later, in college, he interned for Ford Motor Company. The couple then moved to Atlanta and established the first Baranco car dealership in 1978, the former Smith-Johnson Pontiac dealership. After that, they operated Lincoln-Mercury and Acura dealerships, eventually opening the Mercedes-Benz of Buckhead dealership in 2003 and smart center Buckhead in 2007.

Prior to owning the car dealership, Juanita Baranco served as the Assistant Attorney General for the State of Georgia. She has also served on the boards of numerous companies in metropolitan Atlanta (e.g., the Board of Georgia Power Company, John H. Harland Company, and Cox Radio). She also served on the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Board for several years. Mrs. Baranco has also offered her time and expertise

in several volunteer capacities. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Clark Atlanta University and as a Director of the Catholic Foundation of North Georgia. Mrs. Baranco is a past Chair of the Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia and for the Board of the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia.

Gregory Baranco has served on the Board of Trustees for Berry College as well as Morehouse School of Medicine. He also served on the Board for the Kaiser Permanente Foundation Health Plan of Georgia, United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, and was a past Chair of Atlanta Life Insurance. He was a founding member of the National Association of Minority Automobile Dealers (NAMAD) as well as the Saturn Planning and Development Team. Mr. Baranco currently serves on the Carter Center Board of Councilors. He also serves on the Dekalb Development Authority, and is a member of the Dekalb County Task Force on Efficiency in Government.

The Barancos will join the Department throughout this academic year. Their first event will be on Thursday, Nov. 20th, at 11 a.m., to discuss religion and corporate life with GSU students. This event is free and open to the public -- for details contact kmcclymond@gsu.edu or see www.gsu.edu/religion.

Greg and Juanita have four children, two of whom have attended or are currently attending Georgia State University. We proudly welcome them to our Religion and Public Life Fellows family!



GSU Center for Hellenic Studies

The GSU Center for Hellenic Studies has been given the honor of hosting the 2015 Modern Greek Studies Association Symposium. Scholars in Modern Greek Studies from North American and Europe will gather in Atlanta, GA on October 15-18, 2015 for the 24th Biennial symposium, the largest professional organization for Hellenic Studies in the world. Dr. Louis Ruprecht, Director for the Center writes: **"It is a tremendous honor for our program to have been selected to host the 2015 meetings."** To learn more about the program, visit www.mgsa.org.

The theme for the Center's fall lecture series is "New Perspectives on the Ancient World." The Center will focus on ancient rather than modern Hellenic themes with guest lectures from prominent scholars from around the country. Here are a few dates to save on your calendar:

29 SEPTEMBER 2014

"Let's Meet Downtown in the Synagogue: The Archaeology of Jews and Greeks in the Ancient World"

John Gager, William H. Danforth Professor of Religion emeritus, Princeton University

13 OCTOBER 2014

"Stone Age Mariners: Very Recent Evidence for Very Ancient Sea Faring in the Mediterranean:

Thomas Strasser, Professor, Department of Art History, Providence College

27 OCTOBER 2014

"Men of Many Wiles: Homeric Heroes as Masters of International Finance"

Sarah Murray, Digital Humanities Fellow, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

For more information, visit http://www2cas.gsu.edu/hellenic_center/

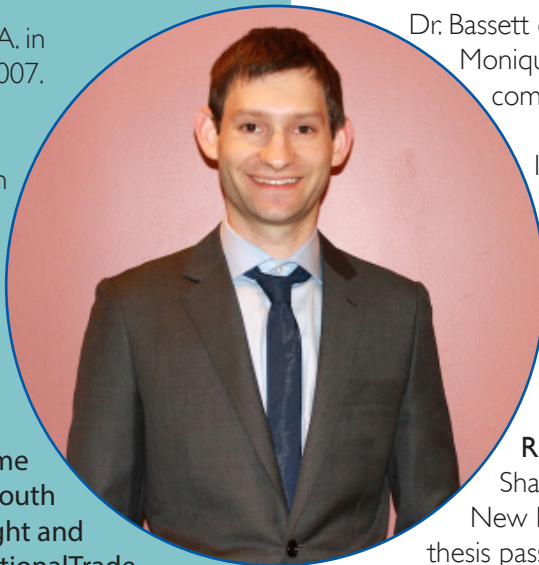
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Aaron Golden, B.A. '07

Aaron Golden earned his B.A. in religious studies in January 2007. Shortly after graduation, he embarked on a trip around the world, focusing mainly on Asia because of his interest in Eastern religions and philosophies. Aaron shares his experience and how his degree in religious studies molded the journey.

Aaron writes: "Later the same year I graduated, I moved to South Korea where I worked, taught and later received a M.A. in International Trade and Finance. I focused a lot of my research on the reunification process and how economics would play a role in reunifying the two countries. I think living in a Confucian society helped me greater understand Asian people through social and cultural meetings.

After living in Asia for over six years, I felt it was time to return to the states. I think the valuable life lessons I learned in South Korea have benefited me greatly. Having earned my degree from the religious studies department, I learned many important things. Having professors like Dr. McClymond and Dr. Ruprecht helped in determining my career path as well as encouraging me to travel and see the world. The religious studies department always offered me a chance to explore religions and cultures in the classroom.

I recommend future students to take advantage of the studying and working abroad opportunities at GSU including the ones in the religious studies department. If it weren't for the courses I took at GSU, I never would have had the insight to travel, work, teach and study abroad."



SPRING 2014 GRADUATES

Natalie Barber successfully defended her thesis, "The Way They Never Were: Nationalism, Landscape, and Myth in Irish Identity Construction." Dr. Bassett directed the thesis, and Dr. John Burrison (Folklore), Dr. Monique Moultrie, and Dr. Kathryn McClymond served on the committee.

In addition to earning her M.A., Natalie received the Graduate Student Award. Natalie's contributions to class discussions and her writing reflect her delightfully intense curiosity and pensive nature. She impressed the faculty as an eager and exceptional participant in class, considerate colleague to her peers, and sharp mind.

Robert Jones successfully defended his thesis, "In the Shadow of the Beast: The Impact of Aleister Crowley on New Religious Movements and Contemporary Culture." The thesis passed with distinction. Dr. Ruprecht directed the thesis, and Dr. David Bell and Dr. Nadia Latif served on the committee.

Robert also earned the Graduate Teaching Award. Robert's course preparation and classroom skills were exceptional. He showed a true care for his students which was reflected in his extraordinary student evaluations.

Robert is now an adjunct instructor at Appalachian State University. He will be teaching a course called "Religions of the World." Robert writes: "The new chair of the Religious Studies Department said that he was familiar with GSU's program and that he was excited to have me in their program."

GRAD STUDENT PUBLICATION

MA student **Ed Van Herik** has recently published a book, **Megaphones Be With You: How Your Organization Can Play the Media Relations Game -- And Win**, that details how a company or nonprofit organization can decide if it has news, how to work with reporters, how to get coverage for a company or nonprofit even if they don't have news, and how to assess return on investment. The book was written to educate CEOs, business owners, and corporate and nonprofit executives about how to reach greater numbers of people with their key messages and provide these leaders with actionable strategies and tactics for doing so effectively. It is available at Amazon.com and the iTunes store. For more information, go to <http://tinyurl.com/omuerwd>.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENT FORUM

The Religious Studies Student Forum (RSSF) aims to be a bridge between the Religious Studies department and the GSU community at large. We foster this connection through events which present scholarly perspectives on interesting topics related to the intersection between religion and other disciplines. The Forum is also a social space for people interested in the academic study of religion to meet others who share a fascination with this subject. RSSF is looking for members that are interested in helping make this year exciting. We are in the early stages of planning our calendar events; and, we need your help! Having a variety of voices helps us create diverse, interesting programming and events. If you been working how you can become more involved, please send an email to Tami Kennedy, tkennedy10@student.gsu.edu, or find us on OrgSync, <https://orgsync.com/23830/chapter>. I am looking to meeting many new people and hope to make this a great year.

*Tami L. Kennedy, President
tkennedy10@student.gsu.edu
Religious Studies Student Forum*

ATTENTION ALUMNI

• • • • •
Have you been recently promoted, accepted a new position, or worked on an interesting project either personally or professionally?

We want to hear from you!

Send your news to Felicia Thomas,
fthomas@gsu.edu





WWW.GSU.EDU/RELIGION

GIVING TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Financial gifts can:

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

For more information and ways to make a gift, please visit www.gsu.edu/religion and click on the “Alumni and Friends” tab.

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBERS

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Grené Baranco - BA '04
David Dreyer - BA '01
Suzanne Degnats - MA '13
Derek Jackson - BA '97
Amna Shirazi - BA '97, JD '00
Betty Woodman - MA '03



Joining the alumni board is easy, and it's a great way to give back to the department. To find out about joining our alumni board, contact Kathryn McClymond at kmcclymond@gsu.edu