

# Religious Studies

Fall 2013

## 2013-2014 RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE FELLOW: JASON LESANDRINI, Medical Ethicist



The Department of Religious Studies is pleased to welcome Jason Lesandrini as the 2013-14 Religion and Public Life Fellow. Mr. Lesandrini is the ethicist at Grady Health System where his role involves clinical ethics consultation, ethics-based organizational policy analysis, ethics infrastructure development and support, and ongoing ethics education and programming. Mr. Lesandrini has worked at numerous health institutions across the country including the Veterans Health Administration and St. Johns Mercy in St. Louis, MO. He has served as the ethicist for the Mass Fatality planning commission for the State of Georgia and currently holds an adjunct faculty appointment in the Physician's Assistant program at Mercer University. Mr. Lesandrini has conducted numerous workshops and presentations on issues of ethics for academic audiences and health care administrators,

providers, patients and the lay public. His academic background is in health care ethics and philosophy. He holds a Master's degree in Philosophy from Georgia State University and a Bachelor's in Philosophy from Michigan State University, and he will soon receive his Doctorate in Health Care Ethics from St. Louis University. His research interests include decision making for incapacitated patients, ethics at the end-of-life, health care resource allocation, and the work of ethics resources in clinical and organizational ethics.

## UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP CAMPAIGN

As part of the university's centennial celebration, the Department Alumni Board is campaigning to establish the first undergraduate scholarship award for a Religious Studies major. Our Board members have already generously pledged \$20,000, so we only have \$5,000 to go! Our goal is to complete the campaign by the end of 2013.

*Recent studies indicate that the single most important factor affecting a GSU student's progress toward graduation is financial need. Religious Studies attracts strong students, and many of them juggle family, work, and their studies. A departmental scholarship will relieve some of the financial demands for a promising undergraduate major.*

Contributions can be made as one-time or pledged gifts spread over a period of time. For further information contact Kathryn McClymond or Carla Lavender, Director of Development for the College of Arts & Sciences (404-413-5109 or [clavender@gsu.edu](mailto:clavender@gsu.edu)).

## ALUMNI BOARD MEMBERS

- Heather Abraham - BA '07, MA '09
- Grené Baranco - BA '04
- David Dreyer - BA '01
- Lori Feig-Sandoval - BA '82
- 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](mailto:kmcclymond@gsu.edu)

## Inside this Issue:

Welcome from Chair .....	2
Faculty Updates.....	3,6
News&Events.....	4-5
Faculty Projects.....	4
Student News.....	5
Alumni .....	6
Giving .....	6

# Welcome from the Chair



Friends,

This is my favorite time of year. Our halls, which have been remarkably quiet for most of the summer, are now bustling with faculty excited about their summer's research and with students eager to begin their fall coursework. Ellen, Claire, and Felicia have been working all summer long to put administrative support into place to facilitate our fall programs. And as I write this letter, I've been meeting with members of our new cohort of graduate students, discussing the classes they want to take, the theses they want to write, and the internships they want to sign up for.

There's also lots of programming to become excited about. Faculty publications are being released this summer and fall, and new research programs have received funding awards.

This fall we're launching a new 4+1 B.A./M.A. program that allows students to earn both their bachelors and masters degrees in Religious Studies in a total of five years. And be sure to read about Jason Lesandrini, the Medical Ethicist at Grady Health System, who is serving as our third Religion and Public Life Fellow (see article on p. 1).

Finally, our Alumni Advisory Board is wrapping up our Undergraduate Scholarship campaign this fall – please consider giving! We've got \$5,000 left to go to reach our \$25,000 goal. As a result, a deserving undergraduate will receive recognition for his/her scholastic achievement as well as some financial support to help with books or fees.

Many thanks to all of you who support the Department of Religious Studies – and happy Fall semester!

*Kathryn McClymond*

*Professor & Chair, Department of Religious Studies*



Sitting: (L to R) Abbas Barzegar, Nadia Latif, Molly Bassett

Standing (L to R): Louis Ruprecht, Kathryn McClymond, Jonathan Herman, David Bell, Monique Moultrie, Tim Renick

\*Not pictured: Kenneth Smith, Nicole Tilford

## FACULTY

### Abbas Barzegar

Assistant Professor  
abarzegar@gsu.edu

### Molly Bassett

Assistant Professor,  
Director of Graduate Studies  
mbassett@gsu.edu

### David Bell

Lecturer  
davidbell@gsu.edu

### Jonathan Herman

Associate Professor,  
Director of Undergraduate Studies  
jherman2@gsu.edu

### Nadia Latif

Assistant Professor  
nlatif@gsu.edu

### Kathryn McClymond

Professor, Chair of Religious Studies  
kmcclymond@gsu.edu

### Monique Moultrie

Assistant Professor  
mmoultrie@gsu.edu

### Tim Renick

Professor, Vice Provost  
trenick@gsu.edu

### Louis Ruprecht, Jr.

Professor, William Suttles Chair  
lruprecht@gsu.edu

### Kenneth Smith

Visiting Instructor  
kpsmith@gsu.edu

### Nicole Tilford

Visiting Lecturer  
ntilford@gsu.edu

## STAFF

### Felicia Thomas

Design, Layout & Editor  
Administrative Coordinator  
fthomas@gsu.edu

### Claire Kooy

Senior Administrative Coordinator  
kkooy@gsu.edu

### Ellen Logan

Business Manager  
elogan@gsu.edu



**Abbas Barzegar:** Dr. Barzegar received a grant from the Georgia Humanities Council to support the public launch of a research team he leads entitled "Children of the Movement: African American Islam after

Malcolm X." The working group of students, professors, and community members is recording oral histories and preserving original materials in an effort to build a digital archive for researchers and educators around the world. The public launch will host recording booths, student presentations, digital kiosks, and a keynote speaker. Check back for further program details.

**Molly Bassett:** Dr. Bassett is on leave in the fall. She will spend much of her time reading (and likely re-reading) *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* and *Moo, Baa, La La La*. She will also be finishing a co-edited volume *Sainthood and Race: Marked Flesh, Holy Flesh* with Dr. Vincent Lloyd (Syracuse); it will include a chapter by Dr. Bassett, "Ma(r)king Aztec God-Bodies."



**Jonathan Herman:** Dr. Herman and his newly published *Taoism for Dummies* will be featured at the Decatur Book Festival on Labor Day weekend. He will present "Dumbing Down the Tao: The Paradox of Domesticating an Esoteric Tradition" at the Fall AAR meeting in



Baltimore. He has also recently completed a personal narrative of an unexpected family reunion, set against the backdrop of a Ukrainian village where more than 400 Jews were murdered in a 1941 massacre. He expects to attend at least one Braves postseason game!

**Nadia Latif:** Dr. Latif served as the departmental Assessment Coordinator for the BA and MA programs this summer. She completed an article on gender, new media technology, and consumption in a Palestinian refugee camp which is currently under review. She also wrote

a book proposal based on her doctoral dissertation on Palestinian camp refugees' narratives of home and displacement. She will be working on the first chapter of the manuscript this fall.

**Kathryn McClymond:** Dr. McClymond has been invited to participate in two upcoming conferences this fall. In September she will discuss the state of the study of religion at public universities at the Schempp conference at Indiana University. In November, she will participate in a special session of the AAR sponsored by the Academic Relations Committee to discuss the Teagle funded study, "Survey of the Long Term Impacts of Liberal Education on Religious Studies Majors." She is currently working on a co-authored article with Dr. Tony Lemieux (Communication) on religion and violence for an edited volume on Faith, War and Violence. This summer she completed an entry on "Sacrifice" for Brill's Vocabulary for the Study of Religion. In recognition of her work, Dr. McClymond was recently elected to the American Society for the Study of Religions, "an interdisciplinary group of about 100 members who are chosen on the basis of their scholarly accomplishments, their comparative interests, and their collegiality with peers."



**Monique Moultrie:** This summer, Dr. Moultrie was selected to participate in the Oral History Institute at Kenyon College in Gambier, OH. While there, she consulted with Institute faculty about using oral histories in her teaching, and discussed



her proposed book on oral histories of black LGBT religious leaders. Dr. Moultrie also participated in the AAR Status of Women in the Profession Work-Life Balance Retreat in June. She also completed a book

review for *Black Theology: An International Journal* this summer.

This fall, Dr. Moultrie will present a paper entitled "The Personal Cost and the Personal Joy: Faith as a Site of Black Activism" during the AAR Women and Religion Section. She will also participate in a Safe Zone training for the National Institutes of Health.

**Tim Renick:** Dr. Renick serves as Georgia State's Vice Provost. In recent months he has given professional talks in Baltimore, Orlando, Washington, and Chicago and at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. He was a fellow at the Aspen Institute in Colorado in June, and his articles appear regularly in *The Christian Century*, including an upcoming piece on changes in the American military and their impacts on attitudes toward war.



**Louis Ruprecht:** Dr. Ruprecht returned as a Visiting Research Fellow to the Vatican Library and Secret Archives for one; May-June 2013. In July, he worked on the Plakias Stone Age excavation project on the southern coast of Crete, a Mesolithic site that promises to make significant changes



to our understanding of early hominid migration out of Africa. Dr. Ruprecht's latest book, *Policing the State: Democratic Reflections on Police Power Gone Awry, in Memory of Kathryn Johnston* (Wipf and Stock, 2013)

Continued on page 6  
See Ruprecht Faculty update continued



## SAVE THE DATE

**AUGUST 23**

12:00 PM

PIZZA FRIDAY

Location: Religious Studies department

**SEPTEMBER 17**

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

ABBAS BARZEGAR

FILM & PANEL DISCUSSION

Location: Clarkston JCLRC Auditorium,  
Georgia Perimeter College

**SEPTEMBER 18**

3:30 PM

GEORGE NAKOS

Location: Langdale Hall 718

**SEPTEMBER 20**

12:00 PM

PIZZA FRIDAY

Location: Religious Studies department

**SEPTEMBER 25**

3:30 PM

KATHRYN KOZAITIS

Location: Langdale Hall 718

**OCTOBER 2**

3:30 PM

FAIDRA PAPVASILIOU

Location: Langdale Hall 718

**OCTOBER 3**

4:30 PM

STEVE ONEY

Location: Speaker's Auditorium -  
Student Center

**OCTOBER 18**

12:00 PM

PIZZA FRIDAY

Location: Religious Studies department

**NOVEMBER 7**

"SMYRNA: THE DESTRUCTION OF  
A COSMOPOLITAN CITY, 1900-  
1922"

FILM SCREENING

Location: TBA

**NOVEMBER 15**

12:00 PM

PIZZA FRIDAY

Location: Religious Studies department

**NOVEMBER 23 - 26**

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELI-  
GION (AAR) ANNUAL MEETING  
BALTIMORE, MD

[www.aarweb.org/annualmeeting](http://www.aarweb.org/annualmeeting)

## ABBAS BARZEGAR RECEIVES BRITISH COUNCIL AWARD

Dr. Abbas Barzegar, in partnership with Dr. Shawn Powers (Dept. of Communication), has received a \$24,000 grant from the British Council to support their ongoing "Civic Approaches to Conflict Resolution Initiative." The proposal, entitled "Religion, Conflict Resolution, and Digital Media in the Greater Muslim World: Dialogue Among Policy Makers and Researchers," asks the question: Can



Muslim religious authorities, institutions and local networks provide solutions to the shared global challenges of social conflict and political violence, and what, if any, role does digital communications technology play in the process? Funding will be used to host two workshop-based dialogues between policy makers and researchers. The workshops will be held in London in coordination with Oxford University and Royal Holloway and in Atlanta in cooperation with the Carter Center and the World Affairs Council.

## DR. BARZEGAR MODERATES FILM AND PANEL ON MUSLIMS IN AMERICA

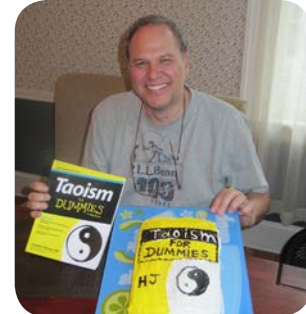
Mark your calendars! All are invited to the film screening and panel discussion *Prince Among Slaves--African Muslims in Early America* from 7:00-9:00 PM on **Tuesday, September 17** at the Clarkston JCLRC Auditorium at Georgia Perimeter College. Dr. Barzegar will moderate and will be joined by GPC faculty members Dr. Valerie Dotson, Paul Gaustad, and Shyam Sriram. This event is free and open to the public.

Dr. Barzegar will also be conducting a series of book discussions supported by the Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys program. Muslim Journeys is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities

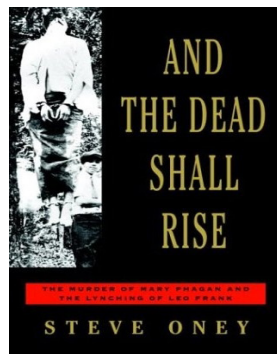
*Continued on page 6, See Barzegar continued*

## JON HERMAN PUBLISHES TAOISM FOR DUMMIES

Dr. Jonathan Herman published *Taoism for Dummies*, his recent contribution to the famous "For Dummies" series. Wiley Publishing describes the book, saying "Taoism For Dummies provides comprehensive coverage of Taoism's origins in China's Chou Dynasty, its underlying quietest principles, its emergence as a major religion, various interpretation of its core texts, including both Eastern and Western interpretations, key Taoist concepts, and much more. It also provide a fascinating glimpse of Taoism in contemporary China."



## STEVE ONEY COMES TO ATLANTA TO DISCUSS THE LEO FRANK CASE, 100 YEARS LATER

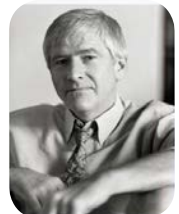


Noted journalist Steve Oney, author of *And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank* will deliver a public lecture on Thursday, October 3, 2013, here at Georgia State University. The lecture, which is free and open to the public, will be presented at 4:30 p.m. in the Speakers Auditorium in the Student Center on Georgia State University's campus.

2013 is the 100-year anniversary of Mary Phagan's death and Leo Frank's conviction for her murder. Leo Frank, a Jewish American, was a superintendent in the Atlanta pencil factory where Mary Phagan's body was found. His wrongful conviction and subsequent lynching in Marietta reverberated around the country.

The Jewish Studies Program is honored to host Steve Oney and to recognize the Leo Frank case as a turning point in Atlanta Jewish history. Please join us!

For further information contact Dr. Kathryn McClymond at [kmcclymond@gsu.edu](mailto:kmcclymond@gsu.edu)



## David Bell approved for promotion!

**David Bell:** The President has approved Dr. David Bell's promotion to Senior Lecturer. Dr. Bell's promotion will take effect July 2014. Congratulations, David!



## VISITING FACULTY MEMBERS

The Department is happy to welcome **Dr. Nicole Tilford** as a Visiting Lecturer for the 2013-14 academic year. Nicole completed her Ph.D. at Emory University, and she will be teaching a variety of courses this year, from our large introductory Perspectives classes to an upper-level undergraduate class, Rels 4700: "Issues in Religious Studies: Jesus in Art and Film" (Spring 2014).



We are also delighted to have **Kenny Smith** with us for another year as a Visiting Instructor. Kenny completed his B.A. and M.A. degrees here in the Department, and he is currently completing his Ph.D. at Emory University. Welcome, Nicole and Kenny!

## HELLENIC STUDIES

In Fall 2012, Dr. Ruprecht became the Director for the Center of Hellenic Studies. Here are a list of Hellenic Studies fall events:

- **September 18, 3:30 pm - Troy Moore Library, Langdale Hall 718**  
George Nakos, "Behind the Headlines: Explaining the Greek Economic Crisis"
- **September 25, 3:30 pm - Troy Moore Library, Langdale Hall 718**  
Kathryn Kozaitis, "Sentiment and Practice among Thessalonians in Crisis"
- **October 2, 3:30 pm - Troy Moore Library, Langdale Hall 718**  
Faodra Papavasiliou, "Old Seeds, New Gardens, Identity, Heritage and Alternative Activism in the Greek Crisis"
- **October 29**  
Day-long series of panel discussions and evening concert in honor of **Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933)** in recognition of UNESCO declaring 2013 "the Year of Cavafy"
- **November 7**  
Film Screening of Maria Iliou's "Smyrna: The Destruction of a Cosmopolitan City, 1900-1922"

For more information, visit [www.cas.gsu.edu/hellenic\\_center](http://www.cas.gsu.edu/hellenic_center)

## Student News

### SUMMER 2013 GRADUATES

**Suzanne Degnats** successfully defended her masters thesis July 2013. Suzanne's thesis titled, "Dispositional Religiosity: Religion in the Context of Life Narratives," was directed by Dr. Kathryn McClymond, Dr. David Bell and Dr. Molly Bassett served as committee members.



**Karli Robinson-Myers** completed her BA and is now enrolled in the MA program here at Georgia State.

**Travis Webb** successfully defended his thesis titled "How to Weaponize a Philosopher: Hobbes's Deadly Arsenal."

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

SHERRI HILL  
MA '13

Ming-A-la-Ba! (Hello)

Never did I think that I would be teaching fourth graders in Myanmar, but 4 months later I am still as amazed with this country. I am teaching at Ayeyerwaddy (A-YA-WADDY) International School. With every new culture I come across, this one is indeed exceptional- the people, the traffic, the hospitality and their hardwired love of their country. With religious tension on every corner it has inspired me to add a religious tolerance section to my Social Studies curriculum, where we have already traveled to over 4 different religious institutions. I get to teach what I love to an age group that is really able to comprehend and absorb tolerance at an amazing rate.

Who knows where I will end up next, but for now, Mandalay is home!

Cheers!

Sherri



This picture was taken in the ancient city of Bagan at sunset. Photo courtesy of Sherri Hill



## Religious Studies Student Forum

The Religious Studies Student Forum is the student-run organization, for majors and minors, who are interested in discussing religious topics outside of the classroom in a more casual atmosphere. The Forum members host Brown Bag talks, attend academic conferences, and organize other events.

The Forum is ready to kick-off the new year with several exciting events! These events include a T-shirt contest, as well as a mixer with the Philosophy Department and a Religious Film showing at the Atlanta Film Festival.

Grace Rivenbark and Tami Kennedy are the co-presidents of the Forum; Annie Gomes is the secretary. If anyone is interested in joining the Forum or if you have any ideas for activity ideas, please contact Grace Rivenbark at [grivenbark1@student.gsu.edu](mailto:grivenbark1@student.gsu.edu).

## ALUMNI NEWS: Where are they now?

.....

**Heather Abraham (MA '08)** alumnus and current alumni board member was featured in the August 22nd issue of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette. To view the article, visit: <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/local/neighborhoods-east/a-newsmaker-you-should-know-abraham-was-the-bookies-daughter-700336/>

**Sarah Levine (MA '12)** is the Publications and External Relations Associate at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) here in Atlanta. In her position, Sarah is responsible for drafting and editing the religious studies news publications on the AAR website. She also coordinates awards juries and publicity for the annual books and arts awards.

**Cathye Schmidt (MA '12)** is currently working as an adjunct instructor at Georgia Perimeter College teaching Introduction to World Religions.

## Ruprecht faculty update, continued from p. 3

was released August 2013. His next book, *Classics at the Dawn of the Museum Era: The Life and Times of Antoine Chrysostome Quatremere de Quincy* (Palgrave 2013) is in production and scheduled for December release.

## Barzegar, continued from p. 4

(Bridging Cultures) and the American Library Association. To register for one or more of the discussions, please go to <https://eapps.gpc.edu/signup/?dept=ctl> The site will also accept guest registration for those not affiliated with GPC. Also free and open to the public.

Discussion Series Dates and Readings: Tuesday, October 1 *Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States, Chapter Three* (Curtis, ed.); Wednesday, October 16 *Acts of Faith* (Patel); Tuesday, October 29 *A Quiet Revolution* (Ahmed) - will include Muslim Guest Panel "In Their Own Voices;" Tuesday, November 12 *The Butterfly Mosque* (Wilson).



[www.gsu.edu/religion](http://www.gsu.edu/religion)

## GIVING TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Our faculty are receiving national recognition for the quality of their research and the excellence of their teaching, and our students are taking a place on the national stage - presenting papers at the national religious studies conference, receiving prestigious scholarships, and finding new ways to connect their learning with the world around them.

Financial gifts can:

- Endow an undergraduate scholarship
- Enhance public programming
- Make unique educational experiences possible, such as: student research opportunities, the Religion and Public Life Program, etc.

For more information and ways to make a gift, please visit [www.gsu.edu/religion](http://www.gsu.edu/religion) and click on the "Alumni and Friends" tab.



*Dr. Monique Moultrie and Karli Myers-Robinson at the Faith & Freedom event, November 2012.*



*Pizza Friday, August 2012.*