

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## *Alumni Newsletter*



We're proud to introduce you to the alumni of the Department of Religious Studies! Our graduates--BA and MA degree holders--are leaders in a wide variety of professions, contributing to the economic, educational, caregiving, and creative fields in Atlanta and around the world. Our graduates don't just make a living with their Religious Studies degree--they make a difference. Check us out at [www.gsu.edu/religion!](http://www.gsu.edu/religion)



Sherri Bouhi, MA 2013

### **Sherri Bouhi, MA 2013**

World History Teacher,  
Westlake High School

Atlanta, GA

*In the last four years, I have taught in Myanmar, Thailand, and Morocco. In the midst of this I found my husband, and we are starting our lives together in Atlanta. I now teach World History and Model United Nations at Westlake High School. Religious Studies has helped me be open to all cultures, be adaptable, and be able to respect all people. I have learned my most valuable lessons through conversation with friends and*

**Religious studies provided me with knowledge, not just about religion, but about politics, gender roles, language, and culture. My advice would be to study hard, but also remember the best way to learn is by talking and sharing knowledge with everyone around you.**

*family from around the world, discussing religion and sharing ideas over a glass of tea (preferably Moroccan mint).*

*Coming back to the US is a big change but I feel I have had the opportunity to travel, learn, and gain experience. Now it is my turn to teach these life lessons. Religious Studies provided me with knowledge, not just about religion, but about politics, gender roles, language, and culture. My advice would be to study hard, but remember the best way to learn is by talking and sharing knowledge with everyone around you.*



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Russell Cambron, BA 2003

### **Russell Cambron, BA 2003**

Part-time Assistant Professor,  
Religious Studies Program  
Kennesaw State University  
Freelance Photography Instructor

Atlanta, GA

*There are all kinds of ways in which Religious Studies has helped me and continues to help me, both professionally and personally.*

*I've always wanted to teach, and religious studies has always been, to me, such an important field to teach in. It has also helped me in my other fields, as well.*

**As far as art and photography go, I think art needs to speak to what's important to the human condition. So religious studies and art really go hand-in-hand in that regard.**

*and still today. Some of my favorite artists deal directly or indirectly with religious themes. And my own MFA thesis project--titled "Boy, Owl, and Raven," which was held at Whitespace Gallery in January 2017--turned out to be influenced by mythology and magical realism, both of overlap which with religious studies.*

*I think it's really important to allow yourself to study what you love. If you're even considering religious studies as a major, you're probably well aware that some people will discourage studying it, just like they discourage majors like philosophy or art. Most of these people will tell you that you won't get a job*

*As far as art and photography go, I think art needs to speak to what's important to the human condition. So religious studies and art really go hand-in-hand in that regard. Religion plays a crucial role in art throughout history*

*unless you major in a hard science or business, but that's simply untrue. My experience has been that my degrees in religious studies have only ever caught people's eyes, not turned them off.*

## Sherry Morton, MA 2010

STEAM Teacher,  
Hess Academy  
Yoga Instructor  
Atlanta, GA

*My training and experiences in Religious Studies have improved my life in innumerable ways.*

*The historical-critical approach to the study of religion taught at GSU helps me to ask better questions and to be a stronger critical thinker. As a result, I am better able to help young children become strong critical thinkers.*

*Knowledge of a culture's religious traditions is one way to gain deep understanding of its history, politics and social dynamics.*

*The community at Hess is multicultural and my training in religious studies helps me connect with this diverse community.*

*My advice would be take every class you can from as many different professors as possible;*

**The historical-critical approach to the study of religion taught at GSU helps me to ask better questions and to be a stronger critical thinker. As a result I am better able to help young children become strong critical thinkers.**

*the faculty at GSU are among the best critical thinkers in the country. Take honors classes and write an honors thesis; strong writing skills are an asset in any career. The honors program gives you access to other amazing faculty members and students at GSU, as well as an opportunity to think about other topics in terms of a*

*culture's religion. Writing an honors thesis provides you the opportunity to not only strengthen your writing skills, but also to spend valuable one-on-one time working through a problem with an expert. Nurture your love for your topic and learning in general. Among the valuable skills I gained from my study of religion are the skills to satisfy my curiosity. Passion and*

*confidence in your ability to achieve are universally marketable skills. Lastly, make friends and enjoy your time as a student, you have no way of knowing how the friends you make at university will enrich your life.*



Sherry Morton, MA 2010

## Ameer Muhammad, MA 2016

Educational Technology Specialist,  
Project RAISE, GSU Perimeter College  
Director of Community Outreach,  
Pianos for Peace  
Atlanta, GA

*Religious studies prepared me for my career in many ways. I came into the program as a documentary filmmaker*

*seeking to learn how to ask the right questions when I conduct interviews with people, who generally do not lead with their faith. I wanted to ask the right question, so as to bring out a more authentic interview. I believe that I learned that and so much more.*

*The classes were engaging and challenging. I learned how to find my voice by having to discuss topics with my colleagues that each of us felt passionate about.*

*The program teaches you how to listen and how to state the other person's argument before you state your own.*

*That process was difficult but can be used in both a professional career and day-to-day life.*

**I learned how to find my voice by having to discuss topics with my colleagues that each of us felt passionate about. The program teaches you how to listen and how to state the other person's argument before you state your own. That process was difficult but can be used in both a professional career and day-to-day life.**

*I really believe that all students are potential religious studies majors. I say that because it is very difficult to find someone that does not have strong beliefs in some aspect of religion and/or spirituality. The program creates a safe space that allows students to express their points of view while hearing others that may greatly differ. The program also challenges students to read arguments from various scholars where you have*

*to learn how to speak from that author's voice or perspective.*

*Learning how to speak from another person's point of view is a remarkable way to learn about others and also learn about yourself. I would also say that in the current world climate, we were able to relate many of the topics and readings with what is going on today.*



Ameer Muhammad, MA 2016



Anthony Petro, BA 2003

**Anthony Petro, BA 2003**

Assistant Professor of Religion and Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Boston University

Boston, MA

*I serve as a professor of religion and of women's gender, and sexuality studies at Boston University. I teach undergraduate and graduate courses in religious studies, advise students, and carry out research and writing in the study of religion in the US. In 2015, I published my first book, *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion*, with Oxford University Press.*

*I'd never heard of religious studies before I took a course with Professor*

*Kathryn McClymond during my sophomore year. That course changed how I saw the world and what I found most compelling to study and think about. Beyond offering a wonderful array of courses in the historical, political, and theological*

*study of religion, the religious studies faculty at GSU pushed me to become a much better reader and writer--these are skills I draw upon constantly.*

*I would advise potential students of religious studies to take courses that interest and challenge them--if possible, that should be their priority in college. Let all the other nagging stuff--how will I get a job, what do I do next, what*

*if the professor is too hard--work itself out later!*

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Ed Van Herik, MA 2015

**Ed Van Herik, MA 2015**

PhD Candidate in Communication Georgia State University Atlanta, GA

*I went for the religious studies degree because I was looking for a new niche for my public relations business, and I found plenty of new clients once I had the MA degree.*

*My advice, be clear on why you are taking religious studies. If you are simply curious about religion, this is a great major. It is also possible*

*to find fulfilling employment, but it pays to be clear about what you see as the opportunities, and research those possibilities to see if your ideas are realistic. Remember, though, that 'realistic'*

*to one person means a larger paycheck and to another it means a more interesting profession. I've always picked the more interesting profession, and I have no regrets.*

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