The Creation and Afterlife of the King James Bible

The Dalai Lama Visits the University of Minnesota

Anticipating Apocalypse with John R. Hall
Religion is a fundamental part of human experience and meaning. It informs all aspects of human society, from individual and collective identity to personal relationships to political sympathies to scientific investigation to artistic creativity. The study of religion, as a result, ranges widely across human experience and the various academic disciplines.
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6 Manifold Greatness: The Creation and Afterlife of the King James Bible
Funded by the Small Grants for Libraries program of the National Endowment for Humanities and co-sponsored by the Program in Religious Studies, Manifold Greatness features a travelling exhibition and lectures by faculty experts celebrating the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible.

9 Faculty Spotlight: The Dalai Lama Visits the University of Minnesota
The Dalai Lama visited the University of Minnesota in May 2011 for the One Heart, One Mind, One Universe! conference. Program in Religious Studies steering committee members Professors Ann Waltner and Paul Rouzer participated in a panel discussion organized for students to engage more directly with the Dalai Lama.

14 Anticipating Apocalypse with John R. Hall
The Program in Religious Studies 2011 Summer Workshop, Anticipating Apocalypse, featured John R. Hall, Professor of Sociology at the University of California-Davis. Jack Delahanty, Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology, calms our fears about the end of days with an overview of the workshop’s presentation and discussion topics.

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Nahid Khan reports on her work as a research assistant for the Shared Cultural Spaces conference in spring 2010.
The Program in Religious Studies at the University of Minnesota draws from a number of academic resources in its mission to offer an interdisciplinary degree. The Religious Studies major offers two tracks. Track I (Religion, Culture, and Society) offers opportunities to focus thematically on the social or cultural contexts and ramifications of religion. Track II (Text and Traditions) allows an in-depth, text-based focus on a specific religious tradition.

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From the Director
By Jeanne H. Kilde

Dialogue and visibility. If two words can characterize the Program in Religious Studies this past year, it is these. Our program has stepped into the limelight this year in new and exciting ways, contributing to the intellectual study of religion both in the academy and in the public sphere.

Our most prominent event was the conference on Shared Cultural Spaces: Islam and the West in the Arts and Sciences—funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the University of Minnesota’s Imagine Fund, and donations from several departments. Nahid Khan reports on this event in our Graduate Spotlight later in this issue of Perspectives.

The most recent outcome of this conference was the completion of a 30-minute television program produced by Twin Cities Public Television (TPT). Titled Bridging Cultures: Islam and the West, the program features interviews with many of the scholars who presented papers during the conference. That program began airing on TPT in November and continues to be listed on the Minnesota Channel. It is viewable online at http://z.umn.edu/bridgingcultures and DVDs of the program will soon be available through the religious studies Web site.

We also launched the Roetzel Family Lecture this fall with an excellent talk by historian James Brewer Stewart on how slavery has been conceptualized among Christians in the United States. Dr. Stewart is not only a noted historian of abolitionism in the antebellum period in the United States but also a committed modern abolitionist and a founding member of Historians Against Slavery. His combination of scholarship and activism was a perfect match for this newly established lectureship, endowed by Professor Emeritus Calvin Roetzel who has also combined political engagement with scholarship throughout his career.

Lastly, the Program sponsored a number of other events designed to foster conversation among faculty and students. The Religious Studies Film Night got going last spring with the screening of Robert Duvall’s The Apostle. Professor Penny Edgell (Sociology) provided commentary and moderated the conversation among the several undergraduates in attendance. The Minnesota Religion and Society Workshop brought together graduate students and faculty from around the region to read and discuss my own paper on the Park 51/Ground Zero Mosque situation. In May, the Program in Religious Studies once again offered an all-day workshop for faculty and graduate students from around the region on the topic of the Apocalyptic. The event was truly energizing. Sociology graduate student Jack Delahanty writes about it in this issue of Perspectives.

Through these events, the Program in Religious Studies continues to demonstrate its commitment to fostering intellectual dialogue around the study of religion on campus, across the Twin Cities and throughout the region. As these types of events raise our visibility in all three venues, the Program in Religious Studies continues to establish itself as a leader in the field of the academic study of religion.

Be sure to check out these and other sponsored events on the religious studies Web site at: http://religiousstudies.umn.edu/.

“Roads Taken: Peddlers and the Great Jewish Migration”
03/22/2012 12:00 PM
Location: 308 Elmer L. Andersen Library

Why did Roman Catholicism become the First World Religion?
03/26/2012 3:30 PM
Location: 1210 Heller Hall

Program in Religious Studies Faculty Lecture featuring Iraj Bashiri
03/29/2012 5:00 PM
Location: 275 Nicholson Hall

Betrayal of the Humanities: The University During the Third Reich
04/15/2012 9:00 AM
Location: 55 Mondale Hall

Religious Studies Film Night: The Book of the Dead
04/19/2012 5:00 PM
Location: 275 Nicholson Hall
Manifold Greatness: The Creation and Afterlife of the King James Bible

By Susan Gangl, Library Liaison for Religious Studies

One of the best-selling books of all time is still making an impact on society in ways we often do not often realize. Quoted by pop singers and presidents, featured on Facebook, read in churches for centuries and, more recently, viewed on YouTube, the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible is now enjoying its 400th anniversary. The occasion is being marked around the world, and the University of Minnesota Libraries recently sponsored several exhibits and a scholarly forum on campus, plus events at area institutions to mark the occasion throughout the Twin Cities.

The University of Minnesota Libraries hosted the NEH-funded traveling exhibition Manifold Greatness: The Creation and Afterlife of the King James Bible, produced by the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with the American Library Association. The traveling exhibit arrived January 25, 2012 for a month-long showing in Wilson Library.

The panels combined original text with images of rare books, manuscripts, and art.

In honor of the 400th anniversary of its publication, the King James Bible is the subject of Manifold Greatness exhibitions at Oxford’s Bodleian Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and at www.manifoldgreatness.org. The traveling display shares the core features of those exhibitions through 14 specially designed graphic panels printed on seven double-sided freestanding banners.

Details on the Exhibits in Wilson Library

The story behind the King James Bible remains surprisingly little known, despite the book’s enormous fame. Translated over several years by six committees of England’s top scholars, the King James Bible became the most influential English translation of the Bible and one of the most widely read books in the world. For many years, it was the predominant English-language Bible in the United States, where it is still widely read today. Even many of those whose lives have been affected by the King James Bible may not realize that less than a century before it was produced, the very idea of the Bible translated into English was considered dangerous and even criminal.

Equally compelling is the story of the book’s afterlife—its reception in the years, decades, and centuries that followed its first printing, and how it came to be so ubiquitous. Essential to this story is the profound influence that it has had on personal lives and local communities—for example, the Bible became a place for many families to record births, deaths, marriages, and other important events in their history. The afterlife of the King James Bible is also reflected in its broad literary influence in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Manifold Greatness: The Creation and Afterlife of the King James Bible, a traveling exhibition for libraries, was organized by the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., and the American Library Association Public Programs Office. It is based on an exhibition of the same name developed by the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, with assistance from the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas, to mark the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible. The traveling exhibition was made possible by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.
Local Events and Exhibits

- **The King James Bible and American History & Culture**, an exhibit inspired by an article written by Professor Bernard M. Levinson. This three panel display was created and designed by Susan Gangl and Rafael Tarrago of the University Libraries, in consultation with Professor Kirsten Fischer. This exhibit was on display in Wilson basement through December 2011, and the three posters from this exhibit were redesigned to accompany the January 2012 show. Professor Levinson spoke at a scholarly forum held in Wilson Library on February 3, 2012.

- **The Word Made Flesh** exhibit was developed by Professor Michael Hancher and Tim Johnson, curator of the University Libraries Special Collections and Rare Books, and ran from November 28, 2011 – February 24, 2012. Focusing on the history of several important Bibles, their printings, and translations in the University Libraries’ collection, **The Word Made Flesh** coincided with the traveling exhibit. The University of Minnesota Libraries has a keen interest in the social, cultural, literary, and religious importance of the King James Bible—the show remained open to the public during the Manifold Greatness exhibit. Professor Hancher and Mr. Johnson spoke at the February 3 forum in Wilson.

In addition to popular press articles, you can find scholarly examinations of many aspects of the King James Version of the Bible in articles, books, and websites, many of which were published this year. A list of recent works and selected websites is posted on the Religious Studies Librarian blog at [http://z.umn.edu/sgang](http://z.umn.edu/sgang)

A course on the King James Bible as literature is being offered fall semester 2012 by Professor David Haley (English). Professor Haley was a featured speaker at the scholarly forum in early February.
Faculty News

Program in Religious Studies faculty members support the University of Minnesota’s mission by advancing academic excellence with extraordinary education, breakthrough research, and dynamic public engagement.

Kirsten Fisher
Kirsten Fisher recently published “‘Religion Governed by Terror’: A Deist Critique of Fearful Christianity in the Early American Republic,” Revue Française D'Études Américaines 125 (3e Trimestre, 2010): 13-26. In 2010, she received the Horace T. Morse-University of Minnesota Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. Currently, Fischer is a Fulbright fellow at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies at the University of Heidelberg, Germany.

Jasper Hopkins

Jeanne H. Kilde

Riv-Ellen Prell
Riv-Ellen Prell has been awarded the 2011 Marshall Sklare Memorial Award of the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry for distinguished achievement as a scholar. She published “‘How Do You Know that I Am a Jew?’ Authority, Cultural Identity and the Shaping of Postwar American Judaism” in Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of History and Anthropology: Authority, Tradition, Diaspora, edited by Ra’anan Boustan, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow, University of Pennsylvania Press 2011, and coedited and introduced a special issue on youth for American Jewish History in 2010.

Daniel Schroeter
Daniel Schroeter co-edited a new volume with Emily Benichou Gottreich, Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa (Indiana University Press, 2011) sheds new light on Jewish life and Muslim-Jewish relations in North Africa through the lenses of history, anthropology, language, and literature.

John Soderberg
John Soderberg received a grant from the Minnesota Historical Society to create three-dimensional models of rock carvings at the Jeffers Petroglyphs Historic Site in southwestern Minnesota. These carvings record historic events, parables, and prayers of American Indians over the last 7,000 years. The project will use a white light scanner to record the sub-millimeter topography of carvings. Work began in August 2011 and will continue until November 2012.

Shaden Tageldin
The Dalai Lama Visits the University of Minnesota

Faculty Spotlight
By Ann B. Waltner

The Dalai Lama appeared at a variety of public and private events in the Twin Cities last May. Two large public events at Mariucci arena were quite spectacular. The local Tibetan community, which numbers about 3,000 and is the second-largest in the United States, turned out in full force, temporarily transforming the basketball arena into a site of pilgrimage and homage.

In addition to attending the two events in the arena, I also participated in a smaller event in which the Dalai Lama spoke directly to several hundred students, including a number of students from China. A dozen scholars talked for three minutes each, and then the Dalai Lama responded to interesting things that we had said. The scholars set the stage for the Dalai Lama to talk with students, and the majority of the dialogue was devoted to them.

The Dalai Lama communicates warmth, charm, and the illusion of intimacy even when speaking from a podium in a basketball arena; in the smaller setting the force of the personal charisma was palpable. Several members of the audience told me later (and privately) that their opinion of him had been completely changed by the event; that while in the past they had viewed him as a scheming politician, they now understood him to be a man of sincerity.

One of the ways in which he communicates charismatic sincerity, following in a venerable Buddhist tradition, is to teach with stories. And in that spirit, I will use the remaining space in this brief essay to tell stories about the Dalai Lama’s visit.

The first story the Dalai Lama told was about a woman he knew who had been very poor and was struggling to support her family. She had encountered some Christian missionaries who had helped her immensely, and as a result, she had converted to Christianity. She felt compelled to tell this to the Dalai Lama, who had served as a spiritual teacher and mentor to her. She concluded her account to him by saying, “Don’t worry. In my next life, I will be a Buddhist.” The Dalai Lama used this story to make the point that when we stray too far from our roots, we make fundamental conceptual errors. This is an odd non-(or even anti-) proselytizing move, but it is consistent with the message of the Dalai Lama—it does not matter what your religious beliefs are (or even if you have religious beliefs), his teachings of harmony and inner peace can resonate. Although His Holiness explicated the story to be sure that the audience got the point, he told it as a joke, and at that punch line he turned to me (I was seated to his immediate right), touched my arm, and burst into hearty laughter. He did this several times during the course of the talk. A member of the audience later referred to me as the Dalai Lama’s “joke buddy.” His use of short stories with a punch line is something we also see in his public talks—it’s a great pedagogic strategy. People remember the stories, and they create a connection between speakers and listeners.

His Holiness received several pointed questions from the audience. My favorite was from a very young Chinese man, who asked, “So what is the story with Buddhists and desire?” His Holiness responded “Desire is not the problem. Attachment is the problem.” He used the example of Buddhism—it is good and fine to desire Buddhism. The desire enables one to become a better Buddhist. But attachment to Buddhism would cause one to be biased in one’s appraisal of Buddhism. Not only would this mean that one would not be able to see other religions clearly, it means that one would not be able to see Buddhism clearly. This is an exchange that I will use in lectures for the rest of my career.

Students were very interested in the question of the succession of the government-in-exile. Until very recently the Dalai Lama was both a spiritual leader and the head of the government-in-exile. Lobsang Sangay was elected to the position of head of the government-in-exile in April 2011. The argument that the Dalai Lama presented to the students was that it had been his experience that the best governments separate religious and secular functions. He said he had spent considerable energy arguing against theocracies in various parts of the world. Thus, it only made sense to end the Tibetan theocracy.

The message conveyed by the Dalai Lama in the small group setting was consistent with his message in the larger arenas—advocating compassion, searching for inner peace, and working for world peace, no matter what one’s particular religious affiliation might be. It was a universalist (though perhaps not secular) message, warmly received by the Minnesota students last May.
What can I do with a degree in religious studies? We hear this question frequently.

Like all liberal arts degrees, the religious studies major trains students in critical thinking and communications skills that are the foundation of most career paths. These include asking significant questions and identifying problems, developing logical interpretations, and identifying inherent biases in communication strategies.

Religious studies students have an added “leg up” on the job market. The market is becoming an increasingly diverse religious space. Religious studies students spend hours in the classroom learning about the beliefs, practices, and histories of different religions; about inter-religion relations under various historical and sociological circumstances; and about issues that bear upon the lives of practitioners of different religions. As a result, they have the ability to comfortably address religious issues in a straightforward manner—without the fear, paranoia, or embarrassment that is so often the response to conversations about religion. Religious studies majors can draw upon their knowledge to foster communication and awareness across religious traditions in “real life” situations. And this ability is of enormous benefit to employers.

Because all career paths these days bring individuals into contact with co-workers and clients of a variety of religious backgrounds, the ability to understand and speak comfortably with everyone is a skill that is increasingly prized by employers. Our recent graduates are pursuing careers in many fields—non-profit work, N.G.Os, government, public policy, publishing, business, education, law, and health care. Many alumni have reported that their religious studies major has been a key asset during interviews and contributes to their on-going success.

As long as religion remains an important marker of identity among people in the workplace, the skills obtained through the Religious studies major will remain highly sought after.

Share your success stories at http://religiousstudies.umn.edu/alumni/

2010–2011 Religious Studies Graduating Seniors

Sam Beddow Philosophy, B.A., Religious Studies B.A., Asian Languages & Literatures minor Senior Project: “To Play or Not to Play: The Phenomenology of Trace” Faculty Advisor: Indira Junghare, Asian Languages and Literatures

Aaron Caufield Ancient Mediterranean Studies B.A., Religious Studies B.A., German minor


Timothy Flanders Religious Studies B.A., History B.A., Latin B.A.

Julia Fox Anthropology B.A., Religious Studies B.A. Senior Project: “Medicine Men and Shamanism: A Conceptual Comparison” Faculty Advisor: Hoon Song, Anthropology

Philip Hinz Religious Studies B.A. Senior Project: “Short and Sweet: Dealing with the Difficulties of Assumptions in Philemon” Faculty Advisor: Jeanne H. Kilde, Religious Studies; Philip Sellew, Classical and Near Eastern Studies

Jennifer Hopkins English B.A., Religious Studies B.A., Spanish Studies and Political Science minors


Ian Larson Journalism B.A., Religious Studies B.A.

Matthew Logan Religious Studies B.A. Senior Project: “Reformed Christianity in a Pluralistic Context” Faculty Advisor: Jeanne H. Kilde, Religious Studies


Candice Reddy Psychology B.A., Religious Studies B.A.

Robyn Rodrigue Religious Studies B.A. Senior Project: “Roles of Women in the Early Church As Seen Through the Undisputed Letter of Paul and Subsequent Interpretations of His Writings” Faculty Advisor: Philip Sellew, Classical and Near Eastern Studies

Kristen Sorenson History B.A., Religious Studies B.A. Senior Project: “American Catholic Experience in Covenant Communities” Faculty Advisor: Jeanne H. Kilde, Religious Studies

Mary Vickerman Anthropology B.A., Religious Studies B.A., Environmental Sciences Policy and Management and Sustainability Studies minors Senior Project: “William James and Haitian Vodou Ceremony” Faculty Advisor: Peter Harle, CLA Student Services; Jeanne H. Kilde, Religious Studies
dent in the Altai for a month. I was thrilled
able to study under a Russian graduate stu-
would be possible. It worked out that I was
the Altai Republic, but I did not think it
border of Mongolia and Kazakhstan called
a small region in southern Siberia on the
programs in Russia. I wanted to study in
Siberia when I started looking for foreign study
I was interested in Siberia. I had no idea
Nations (SPAN) program because she knew
anthropology department suggested I apply
students to design and carry out their
I chose to study abroad after hearing about
program in Russia that allowed under-
graduates to design and carry out their
own research. A friend of mine in the an-
thropology department suggested I apply
for the Student Project for Amity among
Nations (SPAN) program because she knew
I was interested in Siberia. I had no idea
I would be able to study abroad in Sibe-
rnia when I started looking for foreign study
programs in Russia. I wanted to study in
a small region in southern Siberia on the
border of Mongolia and Kazakhstan called
the Altai Republic, but I did not think it
would be possible. It worked out that I was
able to study under a Russian graduate stu-
dent in the Altai for a month. I was thrilled
about how much I would learn from the
experience of traveling with a Russian eth-
nographer and doing first-hand research.

What surprised you most about your
stay? What was surprisingly similar?

The kindness and toughness of the Alta-
ians impressed me the most. My Altaian
friends gave me so much help on my proj-
ject, taking me to visit shamans and lamas
and freely translating Russian and Altaian
to English; they were also incredibly hardy.
At a nationalist festival I watched a game
called Buzkazi—a game like rugby played
on horseback.

My experience coming from a farm allowed
me to connect on a deeper level with many
Altaians. I talked about farming and horse-
back riding with my family as we built a stove
and small log cabin together. So many things
were different and also very similar, for in-
stance, seeing yaks and camels among the
cattle and sheep herds was new to me, but I
was familiar with certain of their cattle breeds
(Herford, for example).

What did you study/research in Siberia?

I wanted to research how and why religious
concepts were changing in the Altai Repub-
lic. I was interested in why the Altaians had
been experiencing a religious resurgence in
modern times and why there were so many
differing opinions on what religion the Altai
should support. Likewise I was interested
in why the Altai felt it needed a national
religion altogether. I found Altaians who
were invested in their national identity, usu-
ally those who were educated and lived in
the cities, wanted to promote Buddhism as
the nation’s religion and downplay the na-
tion’s practice and history of shamanism.
The most interesting part of my research
was finding that despite this desire for the
Altai to have a single national religion, reli-
gious life was so mixed between the differ-
ent religions. I visited a shaman that wore
a Buddhist hat and rung a Buddhist bell in
some rituals, and when I visited a Buddhist
Lama I ended up performing a milk ritual
common among shamanic practices. Like-
wise, Orthodox Christians in Siberia make
pilgrimages to shamanic sites in the Altai.

How did your experience change the
way you approach religious studies?

The experience made the challenges of
ethnography very real for me. I learned
that a good ethnography is made by the
clarity and organization of one’s ideas. It
was not until I got my ideas straight and
clear in my head that the ethnographic ex-
amples fell neatly into place. The experi-
ences also made my interests in religious
studies more clear. I am interested in the
the actions of religion, or the work religion
does among social relationships. This in-
sight has changed my focus from being an
area specialist in southern Siberia to focusing
on how religious concepts change and
adapt to different social settings, such as
the rise of the market economy in the post-
Soviet world.

What are your plans for the future?

I have thought a lot about pursuing similar
studies in graduate school, however, I am
also thinking about starting a new chapter
in my life. I spent last summer volunteer-
ing on a farm in Norway. The experience
also made me realize farming and a rural
lifestyle must be a part of my life. If I pur-
sue further study of the Altai Republic, I
would like to do so from the perspective of
changing religious concepts with regard to
the rise of market economy.

In 2011–2012, I plan to improve my Rus-
sian language skills with the help of a full-
year Foreign Language and Area Studies
fellowship. I also plan to take a few writing
classes while I finish my degree.

Erik Heimark
Anthropology B.A., Religious Studies B.A.

Student Spotlight
By Derk Renwick

Erik Heimark is a senior studying anthropology
and religious studies. He studied abroad in Siberia
last year in order to investigate the changing face
of religious organization in regional attitudes and
religious practices.

Why did you choose Siberia as a Study
Abroad destination?

I chose to study abroad after hearing about
a program in Russia that allowed under-
graduates to design and carry out their
own research. A friend of mine in the an-
thropology department suggested I apply
for the Student Project for Amity among
Nations (SPAN) program because she knew
I was interested in Siberia. I had no idea
I would be able to study abroad in Sibe-
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a small region in southern Siberia on the
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would be possible. It worked out that I was
able to study under a Russian graduate stu-
dent in the Altai for a month. I was thrilled
about how much I would learn from the
experience of traveling with a Russian eth-
nographer and doing first-hand research.
Stephen Brasher
Stephen Brasher is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Writing Studies. His research interests concern the intersection between modern rhetoric—defined as the study of the foundations of ideology and knowledge in discourse—and institutional religion. Stephen is currently at work writing his Ph.D. dissertation, which explores the cultural rhetoric of divinity. The dissertation conceives the Arian Controversy of the fourth century C.E. and the subsequent emergence of orthodox Trinitarian doctrine in the form of the Nicene Creed, as a paradigmatic case-study for exploring both the competing rhetorical constructions of the concept of Jesus’ divinity, and how religious creeds function as regulative technologies of self and society in late antiquity. Stephen is a member of several professional organizations, including the Rhetoric Society of America, the American Society of Church History, and the American Academy of Religion. He is married with two daughters.

Don Burrows
Don Burrows continues to work on his dissertation, which is examining lying and deception in the Greek novel, especially Longus’s Daphnis and Chloe. His studies of the Greek novel regularly intersect with early (and contemporary) Christian writings, insofar as both have been examined as to their common narrative structures and respective responses to empire. Any work on Longus also necessarily runs aground of the rich religious imagery in the work, from the pastoral worship of Pan and the Nymphs to the Dionysian festivals and allusions throughout, to neoplatonic interpretations of the work as a discourse on the all-encompassing power of Eros.

Rachael Cullick
Rachael Cullick came to the University of Minnesota in 2009 with an M.A. in Classics from Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario and is starting her third year in the Ph.D. program in Classics. She will be finishing coursework this year, and is looking forward to rounding out her Religious Studies courses with Theory and Method in the Study of Religion and Professor Sellew’s seminar, Death in Greece and Rome. She will also be investigating possibilities for dissertation research, looking at representations of myth and religion in poetry. This summer she investigated different portrayals of Medea and is particularly curious about why she, and the murder of her children, was a popular motif for many Roman sarcophagi.

Katherine Eerdman
Katherine Eerdman’s dissertation research, scheduled to begin Fall 2012, will explore what objects people use to interact with the supernatural, who participates in these interactions, and why they do so. This project addresses these issues in the context of Gallo-Roman religion with a focus on artifacts recovered by archaeologists from the Source de la Douix, a freshwater spring in Chatillon-sur-Seine, France. The archaeological material from this period of intense cultural interaction illustrates how religious traditions are negotiated in multicultural contexts. Katherine will draw on approaches from the fields of anthropology, religious studies, classics, and history to address this subject. Understanding the objects used and who participated in these rituals will shed new light on complex and diverse Gallo-Roman ritual practices, and also illustrate the role and importance of objects in prehistoric rituals.

Program in Religious Studies Graduate Faculty

Frederick M. Asher
Department of Art History

Bernard S. Bachrach
Department of History

Iraj Bashiri
Department of History

Penny A. Edgell
Department of Sociology

Jasper S. Hopkins
Department of Philosophy

Jeanne H. Kilde
Program in Religious Studies

Bernard M. Levinson
Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies

Oliver Nicholson
Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies

Riv-Ellen Prell
Department of American Studies

Philip Sellew
Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies

Theofanis G. Stavrou
Department of History

James D. Tracy
Department of History

Ann B. Waltner
Department of History
Graduate Spotlight
By Nahid Khan

Nahid Khan’s research focuses on mainstream American newspaper coverage of American Muslims, and links together research in American journalism history and philosophy, American Muslim history, and sociology. Nahid discusses her role as the graduate assistant for the Shared Cultural Spaces: Islam and the West in the Arts and Sciences conference, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities through its program Building Bridges: The Muslim World and the Humanities.

Throughout graduate school I have been involved with community organizations, including helping establish a library, bookstore and reading room at the Islamic Center of Minnesota (ICM) and in past years, representing the ICM on the board of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition; serving on the board of Mizna, the Twin Cities-based Arab American arts organization; supporting a Muslim-Jewish women’s interfaith dialogue group; guiding at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; and serving as head election judge for my voting precinct in Brooklyn Center. I have benefited greatly from interacting with people of diverse backgrounds, and was able to put these connections to good use as the graduate assistant for the Shared Cultural Spaces conference in February 2011.

The National Endowment for the Humanities wanted to see a strong level of community outreach for a project leading to a larger public education program about the humanities. Our community networking involved the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Hennepin County Library, Mizna, the Africa Development Corporation of Minnesota, Sumunar Indonesian performing arts organization, and diverse members of the area’s Muslim community through the ICM and Masjid an-Nur (Mosque of the Light), as well as members of local interfaith dialogue groups and peace and justice-oriented organizations.

The conference was well-attended by community members as well as by U of M students and faculty, with presentations on history, literature, science, architecture, art, media and contemporary issues in religion, and featuring U of M faculty and academics from around the United States. CLA Dean James Parente opened the conference to an overflow audience at the James Ford Bell Library, and Congressman Keith Ellison of the Fifth District of Minnesota, which includes the Minneapolis campuses of the U of M, closed the conference with remarks as the nation’s first Muslim member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The conference also featured a field trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts for specially-organized guided tours that revealed influences upon and of the arts of Islam in the context of the sharedness of world art; three fully-booked performances of the play *Journey*, an adaptation of the 12th-century Arabic literary masterpiece, *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, by Mohammad B. Ghaffari; a conference website, a 30-minute Twin Cities Public Television program that will broadcast five times annually for five years beginning in fall 2011; and pre- and post-conference workshops attended by 30 educators and representatives from community sponsors and other cultural organizations. More than 25 undergraduate students from across the College volunteered time and energy to assist with conference tasks; and we were featured in local news coverage, including the U of M alumni magazine, the *Star Tribune*, the *Minnesota Daily*, the MinnPost on-line news site, and the Arts Matters program on KFAI-FM radio.

Through work on Shared Cultural Spaces, my interactions with so many people of diverse academic and community backgrounds gave me an opportunity to synthesize a variety of perspectives from numerous intellectual disciplines, professions and cultural networks. In a sense, it helped me reach a point of convergence as I think about my dissertation, my academic future, and the interdisciplinary work I would like to do to build bridges between academia and community.

Perhaps the most important insight I gained was in response to a question I had the privilege to ask of NEH chairman Jim Leach during a visit to the Twin Cities in October 2010, on the relationship between journalism and the humanities. He said that journalism’s role in leading and shaping public discourse is what makes it a fundamental part of the humanities, which emphasizes the activity of reflection about the human condition. Immediately I thought of the statement that introduces the Program in Religious Studies: “Religion is a fundamental part of human experience and meaning. It informs all aspects of human society . . . The study of religion, as a result, ranges widely across human experience . . .” Yes, convergence indeed!
Apocalypse, increasingly present in popular film and literature, has long been among the most important concepts in religious belief and ritual. Early civilizations, according to Mircea Eliade, lacked the historical worldview needed to conceptualize Armageddon, but fear of the future has been chief among the defining characteristics of ritual for as long as religion has existed. John R. Hall, sociologist of religion from the University of California-Davis, explores how the concept of apocalypse, or the end of the world as we know it, can inform our study of social behavior in both religious and secular realms.

Hall’s thesis posits that by examining the apocalyptic, we can trace “configurational trends toward modernity” from medieval times to the present. The first apocalyptic social movements arose in the early Middle Ages, were developed and refined in the Protestant Reformation, and with Robespierre’s Terror, began to shed their exclusively religious character following the French Revolution. With the Reformation, Calvinists brought religious zeal to nationalism in Europe. In the 17th and 18th centuries, state-regulated Calvinism embraced individual-divine connections, relegating the theological apocalyptic to a more obscure cultural standing. With the Terror’s inception just before the beginning of the 19th century, violent moral regulation in secular politics expanded apocalyptic imagery that had previously been confined to the realm of religion. Thus, in phenomenological terms, the apocalyptic has hastened the merger of the religious and secular spheres.

After Hall’s presentation, scholars of English and history gave short talks on eschatological interpretations of the apocalyptic. Discussing how Mormon tradition has developed since the expected end of the world did not materialize in 1844, participants suggested that responses to a failed apocalypse pose useful questions about the character of religions. In the words of Professor John Watkins, “the Mormons went to Utah expecting the end, but instead they found a civilization.” How was apocalyptic language transformed into a religious work ethic? Heavenly kingdoms will persist, life will continue on earth, and Mormons must act accordingly. Would their faith be as strong as it is today if it had not expected an apocalypse then? In Iran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is charged with preparing for the arrival of the savior, and with it, an apocalypse. Yet political challenges wait at every turn; while clerical leadership, whose power would be diminished with the Mahdi’s arrival, advocate waiting in pious patience for the savior, Ahmadinejad, whose power would be preserved by the savior’s coming, constantly seeks ways to hasten it. Empowered by apocalyptic theology, he extends apocalyptic language further and further into Iranian culture, and as a result, thousands of people eagerly await the event each Tuesday night in the Jaklaram mosque. But do most Iranian Shi’ites believe in that same theology, or do recent uprisings against Ahmadinejad belie the perceived common desire for the savior, and the apocalypse, to come?

The workshop concluded with papers on the apocalypse in modern popular culture. Western movies and comic books use redemption through deliverance to tell stories with moral undertones, and this trend both shapes and reflects us. Can a secular theory, peak oil, for example, take on quasi-religious dimensions through apocalyptic language? Or, as some participants suggested, is it only by imagining the end of the world as we know it that we can effect transformative change in secular culture?
A hallmark of the Program in Religious Studies is our interdisciplinary philosophy—students have the option to choose their own research topics, courses, and advisers from departments across the entire University. This philosophy extends to outreach and community programming for our undergraduate and graduate students as well. Our lecture series, the Roetzel Family Lecture in Religious Studies, is student-centered, providing professional academic experiences for our junior scholars; and this year’s brand-new Minnesota Religion and Society workshop was designed to provide a supportive, intellectual home for our diaspora of interdisciplinary religious studies graduate minors.

We offer high-quality programming through careful planning and efficient organization, even and especially in times of diminishing resources. We pride ourselves on being responsible stewards of state and private funds, and we love what we do—we have a knack for administering the Program in Religious Studies in ways that provide community, academic, and professional opportunities while sharing a real passion for religious studies with our students. Your support makes our work possible. Please consider joining the growing list of donors who have contributed to making religious studies at the U of M a nationally recognized program!

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The Program in Religious Studies General Fund

The Program in Religious Studies General Fund supports community programming for University of Minnesota religious studies undergraduate and graduate students. Each year, the Program in Religious Studies sponsors open house lunches and a graduate reception, as well as the summer workshop series, the Minnesota Religion and Society workshop, and a number of lectures aimed at fostering student engagement.

The Roetzel Family Lecture in Religious Studies

Established in 2010 in honor of Professor Calvin J. Roetzel’s parents, the Roetzel Family Lecture in Religious Studies brings national top scholars of religious studies to the University of Minnesota for engaging conversations with faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and community partners.

Harold C. Anderson Scholarship

The Harold C. Anderson Scholarship Fund was established to provide scholarships to students in need of financial assistance who are pursuing a degree in religious studies at the University of Minnesota. Each spring, sophomores and juniors majoring in religious studies are encouraged to apply for this scholarship honoring the memory of Dr. Harold C. Anderson, M.D., a native Minnesotan and alumnus of the University of Minnesota. The scholarship is funded by friends of Dr. Anderson who wish to commemorate his many acts of friendship and generosity towards U of M religious studies students, and perpetuate his memory by celebrating one of his favorite verses from the Bible: “Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” —Hebrews 13:1–2

“My parents left one priceless treasure for their children—a love of and devotion to education. It is from that rich legacy that our gift is given to assist the Program in Religious Studies at the University of Minnesota.”

—Calvin J. and Caroline K. Roetzel

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