First Annual

WAYS OF KNOWING

GRADUATE CONFERENCE ON RELIGION

Harvard Divinity School

Friday, October 26 – Saturday, 27, 2012

8 AM – 7 PM

Andover Hall

45 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts

hds.harvard.edu/gradreligionconference
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26

Registration 7:00 - 8:00 am [Braun Room]
Breakfast 8:00 - 8:40 am [Braun Room]

Opening Remarks 8:40 - 9:00 am [Sperry Room]
Professor Francis X. Clooney, SJ
Parkman Professor of Divinity and
Professor of Comparative Theology
Director of the Center for the Study of World Religions
Harvard Divinity School
Session I 9:00 - 11:00 am

“Knowledge and Revelation: Explorations in Pre- and Early Modern Landscapes” [Sperry Room]
Chair: Cyril Wohrer, University of Oxford

"Embracing Incomprehensible Incomprehensibly: The Two Epistemologies in Nicholas of Cusa's On the Vision of God"
Kevin M. Johnson, Boston College

“He Fills My Heart with Transcendental Knowledge’: An Exploration of the Role of the Guru in the Revelatory Process of Acquiring Knowledge in Gaudiya Vaishnavism”
Cyril Wohrer, University of Oxford

“The Future Is in a Riddle: Intriguing Construction of Prophetic Knowledge in Song China”
Helen Jiang Qiu, Columbia University

“Moral Knowing through Aesthetic Knowing: Ethics and Aesthetic Theory in Three Versions of the Ramayana”
Shankar Nair, Harvard University

“Religion and Knowledge, Knowledge as Poetry: Creole Epistemology in El Desierto Prodigioso y Prodigio del Desierto by Pedro de Solís y Valenzuela”
Maria Quevedo Alvarado, Harvard University

“Constructing Theologies: Interdisciplinary Proposals” [Andover 102]
Chair: Carolyn Browning Helsel, Emory University

“(Re)constituting the Knower: Toward An Erotic Epistemology”
Jacob D. Myers, Emory University

“Ethnography as a Method for Diversifying the Sources of Theological Knowledge”
Lynn B. E. Jencks, Northwestern University

“Utterly Unseemly in the Academy: Jonathan Z. Smith and Paul J. Griffiths on “Us” and “Them” in the Academic Study of Religion”
Jonathan Stotts, Vanderbilt University

“What Religion Cannot Know and How Not to Know it Best”
T. Adam Van Wart, Southern Methodist University

“James Alison and Rowan Williams: Toward a Properly Anthropological and Hermeneutical Theology”
Adam Wert, Harvard Divinity School

Coffee Break 11:00 - 11:15 am [Braun Room]
Session II 11:15 - 1:00 pm

“Gender, Sexuality, and Religious Readings” [Andover 103]
Chair: John Harness, University of Chicago Divinity School
“Epistemology of the Belly: “Σπλαγχνίζομαι” in Lk 7:11-17, or A Widow’s Silence and the Lord’s Guts”
Olivia Bustion, University of Chicago Divinity School

“‘Then do you also fail to understand?’ Persistent Stupidity and Queer Failure in the Gospel of Mark”
Alexis G. Waller, Union Theological Seminary

“Theologizing Gender in the Rothschild Canticles”
Jennifer Freeman, Vanderbilt University

“Neopagan Spirit Animals as Self-Knowing”
John Harness, University of Chicago Divinity School

“Islam: Law, Politics, and Reform” [Sperry Room]
Chair: Jennifer T. Gordon, Harvard University
“Liberal-Islam: Redefining a Methodological Concept”
Wael Abu-'Uksa, Harvard University

“Divine Knowledge for Human Consumption: Testimony in the Legal Theory and Theology of ‘Umar Najm al-Din al-Nasafi (d. 537/1142)”
Dale J. Correa, New York University

“What is wrong with Tajdid? The Non-Liberating Search for a Post-Colonial Muslim Theory of Law”
Omar Farahat, Columbia University

“From Commentary to Exegesis: The Hermeneutics of Early Twelver Shia Writings”
Jennifer T. Gordon, Harvard University
“The Subject, Knowledge, and Belief in Theology and Philosophy” [Andover 102]
Chair: Nicholas DiSalvatore, Boston College
Nicholas DiSalvatore, Boston College
“The Spiritual Senses and the Disabled Subject”
Kevin McCabe, The University of Notre Dame
“Religious Interiority and Self-knowledge in Light of Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy”
Cambria Janae Kaltwasser, Princeton Theological Seminary
“‘Mormon Slang’: Reason, Revelation, and the Limits of Religious Certainty”
Jared M. Halverson, Vanderbilt University

Lunch Break 1:00 - 2:00 pm [Braun Room]
Session III 2:00 - 3:45 pm

“Representing ‘Religion’ and ‘Religions’” [Sperry Room]
Chair: Anand Venkatkrishnan, Columbia University
“Dharma in the Dreaming Spires: The University of Oxford and the Production of Academic Knowledge on Indian Religions in the 19th and 20th Centuries”
Chao Ren, Harvard Divinity School

“The Presentation of Amarna: How to Introduce the Religious Ideas of the Amarna Period?”
Michael Chen, Harvard Divinity School

“The Role of the Religious at Memorial Museums: Case Studies from New York”
Kate Yanina DeConinck, Harvard Divinity School

“Translating Religio: A Prehistory of Bhakti and Jñāna”
Anand Venkatkrishnan, Columbia University

“The Body and Nature: Deploying Medical and Scientific Discourses” [Andover 103]
Chair: Nan Hutton, Harvard Divinity School
“Bridging the Gap: Embryology and the Scholastic Response to Tantra”
Catherine Hartmann, University of Chicago Divinity School

“Ways of Knowing Death”
Austin Campbell, Harvard University

“Uncertainty as a Strategy of Persuasion: 19th-century American Women Regarding 'the Woman Question”’
Nan Hutton, Harvard Divinity School

“Sacred Mapping: Paradise in Medieval Islamic Exegesis”
Michael VanZandt Collins, Harvard University
“Judaism: Ritual, Identity, and Interpretation” [Andover 102]
Chair: Sam Berrin Shonkoff, University of Chicago Divinity School
“Rupture, Reflection and Renewal: Mimesis and the Transformation of Meaning in Leviticus Rabbah”
David Gottlieb, University of Chicago Divinity School

“We Shall Do and We Shall Understand”: Halakhah, Habitus and Embodied Theology in Judaism”
Sam Berrin Shonkoff, University of Chicago Divinity School

“‘Gather Yourselves, O Worthless Nation’: Judean Identity as Epistemic Process in Zephaniah’s Oracles Against the Nations”
Sarah Woodbury, Harvard Divinity School

Coffee Break 3:45 - 4:00 pm [Braun Room]
Session IV 4:00 - 5:25 pm

“Kierkegaard on Religion, Ethics, and Epistemology” [Sperry Room]
Chair: Ernie Mitchell, Harvard University
“The ethical as such is the universal’: Kierkegaard’s Portrayal of Agamemnon in Fear and Trembling”
A. J. Goldman, Harvard University
“What do I know? Kierkegaard, Descartes, and Montaigne on Love, Thought, and Existence”
Jason Hoult, York University
“‘Faith’ in Kierkegaard’s Fear and Trembling”
Bharat Ranganathan, Indiana University

Latina Feminist Intercultural Epistemologies [Andover 102]
Chair: María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa, Harvard Divinity School
“Mestizaje as the ‘Cusp’ of Interculturality”
Robyn Henderson-Espinoza, University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology
“Decolonizing our Creation Stories: A Queer Latina Feminist Intercultural Approach”
María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa, Harvard Divinity School
“MotherWit and Sabiduría: Womanism Meets Latina Feminism in Intercultural Knowledge Production”
Sofía Betancourt, Yale University
“Augustine: Knowledge and Love” [Andover 103]
Chair: Trevor M. Bibler, Vanderbilt University
“On Augustine’s Search for Rest (quiesco) in Confessions”
Trevor M. Bibler, Vanderbilt University

“Love and Think as You Will? Love as the Basis for Ethical and Epistemic Plurality in Augustine”
Kyle Rader, University of Chicago Divinity School

“Holy Ignorance in the Knowledge of the Holy One: A Marionist Perspective on Augustine’s Knowledge of God”
Petra Elaine Turner, University of Virginia
Keynote Address 6:00 - 7:30 pm [Sperry Room]

“The Case of the Disappearing Body: Enculturation and Reflexivity as Embodied Knowledge and Means of Knowing”
Rebecca Sachs Norris
Professor of Religious and Theological Studies
Merrimack College

Rebecca Sachs Norris received her Ph.D. from the University Professors at Boston University in Religious Studies and Anthropology; her work focused on body, culture and identity. She is Professor of Religious & Theological Studies at Merrimack College in North Andover, MA, and was formerly an Instructor of Medicine at the Boston University School of Medicine as well.

Reception 7:30 - 8:30 pm [Rockefeller Cafe]
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27
Registration 7:00 - 8:00 am [Braun Room]
Breakfast 8:00 - 9:00 am [Braun Room]
Session V 9:00 - 10:45 pm

“Friendship and Epistemology: Foucauldian Reflections on Interdisciplinarity” [Sperry Room]
Chair: Luke Moorhead, Yale University
“Foucault’s Contribution to the Study of Friendship in Religious Scholarship”
T. J. Dumansky, Yale University

“Foucault, Friendship, and the Persistence of Economy”
Devin Singh, Yale University

“Friendship and the Limits of Self-Knowledge”
Erinn Staley, Yale University

“Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Knowledge Production: The Task for Religious Studies”
Luke Moorhead, Yale University

Chair: Peter Cajka, Boston College
“Liturgical Politics: Or, How Catholics Make Traditions”
Peter Cajka, Boston College

“Music as Learning: The Importance of Music from the Black Idiom in the Liturgy for African American Catholics”
M. Roger Holland, II, Union Theological Seminary

“The Making and Unmaking of a Miracle: Intersubjectivity, Gender, and the Politics of the Miraculous at the Csíksomlyó Roman Catholic Pilgrimage Site, Harghita County, Romania”
M. Roscoe Loustau, Harvard Divinity School

“Traditional Medieval Piety and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge: Teaching the Psalms in the N-Town Mary Play”
Katharine S. Mahon, University of Notre Dame

Coffee Break 10:45 - 11:00 am [Braun Room]
Session VI 11:00 - 12:45 pm

“The Buddha’s Ways of Knowing” [Sperry Room]

Chair: Shankar Nair, Harvard University

“‘After the Closing of the Eye of the World': Vasubandhu on the Belated Priority of Philosophy”
Sonam Kachru, University of Chicago Divinity School

“Knowing Reality and Being Reality in Mind-only Buddhist Thought”
Joy Brennan, University of Chicago

“Buddhology as Part of Philosophy: māyoparṇa and What the Buddha Sees in Haribhadra’s Ālokā”
Pierre-Julien Harter, University of Chicago

"Ratnākaraśānti's Interpretation of a Buddha's Formless knowledge"
Davey Tomlinson, University of Chicago

“Mediation and Representation: Religion, Art, and Society” [Andover 103]

Chair: Travis Warren Cooper, Indiana University (Bloomington)

“Abiding in the Unremitting Hell: The Representation of Hell in Hong Kong and Hollywood Gangster Movies”
Xingyi Wang, Brandeis University

“Sin, Sexuality, Pseudonymity, and the Mis-taken Identities of Nicki Minaj and Beyoncé”
Gerald Williams, Harvard University

“Angel Action: Mediating Violence in Juárez”
Jessica M. Smith, Emory University

“Between Knowing and Feeling: The Subjective Construction of Pentecostal Experience”
Travis Warren Cooper, Indiana University (Bloomington)
“Pragmatism, Knowledge, and Theological Language” [Andvoer 102]
Chair: Jeremy Sabella, Boston College

“’Real Things’: Reinhold Niebuhr’s Theological Pragmatism as Model for Cross-disciplinary Engagement”
Jeremy Sabella, Boston College

“From Recognition to Acknowledgment: Ordinary Language Theology After Kevin Hector's Theology Without Metaphysics”
KC Flynn, Baylor University

“Religious Utterance and the Dialectical Foundation of Human Understanding”
Devin O’Rourke, University of Chicago Divinity School

“Nonidentity and the Nocturnal: A Postidealst Theology of Language in Light of the Human(izing) Condition”
Eduardo Gonzalez, Boston College

Lunch Break 12:45 – 1:45 pm [Braun Room]
Session VII 1:45 - 3:30 pm

Vital Entanglements: New Vistas in the Study of Religion and Medicine” [Sperry Room]
Chair: Tyler Zoanni, New York University

“Reading unto Dying: The Tibetan Book of the Dead and a Buddhist Ethics of (Palliative) Care”
Elizabeth J. Angowski, Harvard University

“Homosexuality and its Shifting Appeal: Medical, Scientific, and Theological Authority in 20th Century Pastoral Counseling Literature”
Mara G. Block, Harvard University

"Spiritual Healing in a Digital World: Technology, Authority, and Power in African and Diasporic Religions"
Funlayo E. Wood, Harvard University

“Second Opinions? Evangelicalism, Therapeutic Publics, and the Politics of Autism”
Tyler Zoanni, New York University

Trauma, Anger, and Bodily Practices” [Andover 103]
Chair: Helen M. Orr, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

“Conscientization in the Body: the Relationship of History, Anger and Feeling as a Tool for Embodied Sexual Ethics”
Jennifer Wade, Boston College

“Negating the Unknowable: Trauma and the Hegelian Subject”
Helen M. Orr, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

“Hitchhiking in Cyborg-Space: Suffering Knowledge of Bodies and Boundaries”
Eleanor Craig, Harvard Divinity School

“The Physiology of Complex Trauma/PTSD: Implications on the Theology of Forgiveness”
Jennifer Wilkes Stuart, Harvard Divinity School, The Danielsen Institute at Boston University, and Chaplaincy Department at Brigham and Women’s Hospital
“Philosophy, Religion, and Theology: Interdisciplinary Explorations” [Andover 102]

Chair: Kenneth Yu, University of Chicago

“Visual Hermeneutics and Platonic Epistemology in the Tabula of Cebes”
Kenneth Yu, University of Chicago


“Language and The Persuadable Body in Melanchthon’s Teachings on the imago dei” Klaus C. Yoder, Harvard Divinity School

Coffee Break 3:30 - 3:45 pm [Braun Room]
Session VIII 3:45 - 5:30 pm

"Muslim Networks of Solidarity: Anthropological Knowledges" [Andover 102]
Chair: Celene Ayat Lizzio, Brandeis University
“Let’s Gather Around the Sofreh: Rituals Shared by Zoroastrian and Shiite Women in Iran”
Myriam N. Sabbaghi, University of Chicago Divinity School

“Theory and Practice: The Search for Islamic Knowledge as Ethical Formation in Paris”
Kirsten Yoder Wesselhoeft, Harvard University

“‘Egyptian Women are a Red Line’: Female Activists and the Islamist-Secular Polarization of Revolutionary Egypt”
Noha Roushdy, American University in Cairo

“Intersectionality and Standpoint Theory: Analytic Tools for Integrating Scholar/Practitioner Perspectives in Religious Studies”
Celene Ayat Lizzio, Brandeis University

“Not a Simple Text: Rhetoric and the Production of Knowledge” [Sperry Room]
Chair: Rebecca Stephens Falcasantos, Brown University
“Allegory, Quote, and the Language of Interpretation in Classical Chinese Texts”
Larson Di Fiori, Brown University

“Producing a Knowledge of Identity in Fifth-Century Constantinopolitan Rhetoric”
Rebecca Stephens Falcasantos, Brown University

“Did the Ancient Israelites Think Differently Than We Do?”
Nicole Tilford, Emory University

“The Romantic ‘Big Bang’: The Problematic Inheritance of Nineteenth Century German Romanticism in Early Christian Studies”
Robyn Walsh, Brown University
Closing Remarks 5:30 - 6:00 pm [Sperry Room]

Professor Ahmed Ragab
Richard T. Watson Assistant Professor of
Science and Religion
Harvard Divinity School
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CONTACT US

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions at

gradreligionconference@hds.harvard.edu

Conference Coordinator

Faye Bodley-Dangelo
ThD Candidate
Harvard Divinity School

Support Staff

Kirsten Yoder Wesselhoeft
PhD Candidate
Harvard University

Faculty Advisor

Ahmed Ragab
Richard T. Watson Assistant Professor of Science and Religion
Harvard Divinity School