

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION NEWSLETTER

A Note from the Chair

Professor Kevin Trainor

Welcome to our annual department newsletter. This has been another year marked by a significant transition, the approaching retirement of Luther Martin after forty-three years at UVM (see his interview with Kabir Tambar below). As I'm sure many of you know, Luther has had a distinguished career at UVM, with a remarkable record of publication and service to the department, the university, and the international community of scholars of religion. In recognition of Luther's impending retirement, the department applied for and was awarded a Burack Presidential Lecturer grant to bring noted Harvard historian Daniel Smail to campus this past March. Professor Smail has been a pioneer in the field of "deep history," and he presented an exciting lecture entitled, "Is Culture Just a Drug? History, Neuroscience and the 'Great Transformation.'" A large audience drawn from several departments across the university was present for his talk, which illuminated the great potential of new approaches that cross the boundaries of the natural and social sciences and the humanities. His talk was recorded and is available for viewing in the UVM library. Prof. Smail's lecture provided a particularly fitting opportunity to recognize Luther's groundbreaking work in the cognitive science of religion, which has opened up new avenues for understanding religion. Luther has brought enormous intellectual vitality to the department and the university, and his presence will be sorely missed. In the fall he will take up a visiting faculty position at Mazaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, one of the many European universities with which he has set up international exchanges over the years.

I hope you enjoy reading about the many activities and achievements of our faculty and students this past year. We want to strengthen our connections with department alums, and would love to hear from you. Please send me an e-mail (kevin.trainor@uvm.edu) and let me know what you've been up to. And if you find yourself in the neighborhood, be sure to drop in at 481 Main for a visit.

Warmest regards,

Kevin



*Department of Religion
481 Main St.
Burlington, VT 05405
<http://www.uvm.edu/~religion>*

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Faculty News

Erica Andrus

In Fall 2009 Professor Andrus returned to teaching full time at UVM, offering a number of courses including "Intro to Comparative Religions," "Religion in America," and "Religion and Popular Culture." She will also be teaching REL020 "Intro. to Comparative Religions" online during the summer 2010 session. She is currently pursuing research interests in religion in film – focusing on Clint Eastwood – and television – with a focus on *Battlestar Galactica*. Professor Andrus also brings her work at UVM together with her ongoing effort in pursuing small-scale, sustainable agricultural practices at her family's farm by conducting research on religion, food and agriculture in Vermont and in 19th century Baltimore. On Boundbrook Farm, which she runs together with her husband Erik, she continues experimental research into small grains, including heritage wheat and rice, as well as into alternate energy generation, via a Savonius Rotor wind power project for which the farm received a SARE grant.

Thomas Borchert

Professor Borchert received a fellowship at the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, where he is spending the spring semester 2010. While there he is working on a project which seeks to explain contemporary forms of Buddhism through the combination of transnational imaginings of Buddhism and local governance regimes. In addition, he published a review essay on four recent books in Buddhism in colonial Indochina in *Religious Studies Review*. In the summer 2009, he traveled to Thailand where he interviewed Thai monks about their perspectives on politics and citizenship, and had the chance to interview some monks at rallies of the "red shirts," the populist group that is opposed to the current Thai government. During the trip to Thailand, he used his three children as research assistants. In particular his then 1 year old daughter, Jing Mae Williams, was adept at getting reticent monks to acquiesce to being interviewed.

Vicki Brennan

Professor Brennan continues to work on her book project, *Singing the Same Song: Music, Religion and*

Civil Society in Postcolonial Nigeria. Her article, "Mediating *The Voice of the Spirit*: Musical and Religious Transformations in Nigeria's Oil Boom" was published in May 2010 in the journal *American Ethnologist*. She also received the Joan Smith Faculty Research Award from the College of Arts and Sciences which will support field research in Nigeria during the summer of 2010. In May 2010 she will travel to London and Birmingham to conduct archival research on the use of music in missionary efforts to convert Yorubas during the colonial period. She will also present some of her research on Nigerian gospel music at the Cadbury Conference on popular culture and urban experience in sub-Saharan Africa

Anne Clark

Professor Clark spent four weeks in Tuscany as a participant in the seminar, *Dante's Divine Comedy and the Medieval World*, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. This intensive, interdisciplinary seminar offered an immersion the poetry, art, politics, and religion of Dante, and she is now writing a conference paper on Dante as visionary poet, comparing Dante to other traditions of medieval writing, especially the work of Hildegard of Bingen. Her ongoing work on Hildegard of Bingen was the source of two outreach opportunities: For the Vermont Council on the Humanities, she gave a talk at Fletcher Free Library on Hildegard of Bingen's roots in her monastic life, and for the Environmental Studies course on religion and the environment, she gave a lecture on Hildegard's ways of understanding the cosmos. She also gave a paper at the November meeting of the American Academy of Religion, examining the one-hundred year publishing history of the journal *Church History* as a way of looking at changing trends in scholarship on the history of Christianity. On the teaching side, she undertook a significant revision of Religion 124 ("Christianity") one of her regular classes, expanding the materials to include pre-modern developments in India, China, and Africa. She is now looking forward to a trip to Sri Lanka this summer with Kevin and their son Andrew.

Faculty Research (continued)

Cuong Mai

Professor Mai developed a new course for Fall 2009 entitled "Buddhism and the West," an upper-level seminar that surveyed recent research on issues pertaining to the history of the Western encounter with Buddhism in Asia and the continuing transformations of traditions of Buddhism as they are transmitted across cultural, linguistic, social, and national boundaries.

Luther H. Martin

Professor Martin continues to publish prolifically on the topics of cognition, history, and Hellenistic religions. In 2009 Vaniyas Press published *Imagistic Traditions in the Graeco-Roman World: A Cognitive Modeling of History*, which he edited with P. Pachis. And in July 2010 the volume *Past Minds: Studies in Cognitive Historiography*, edited with J. Sørensen will be published by Equinox. In 2009 he also published chapters in the volumes *Religionskritik in der Antike* and *The Mystic Cults of Magna Grecia*. His article, "Globalization, Syncretism, and Religion in Western Antiquity: Some Neurocognitive Considerations" will be appear in the journal *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* in July 2010. Professor Martin presented his research in a number of international venues, from Montreal to Berlin to Sicily. He is also an invited participant in the "Helsinki Group" which will meet at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, Helsinki University in July, to develop, for the US Department of Defense, a presentation on research initiatives for the explanation of human behavior and culture, especially religion, within the social and cognitive sciences. During the 2010 IAHR Congress, Professor Martin will be presented with a *Festschrift* entitled *Chasing Down Religion: In the Sights of History and the Cognitive Sciences. Essays in Honour of Luther H. Martin*, D. Wiebe and P. Pachis, eds. Following his retirement from UVM, Professor Martin will be teaching two courses for The Department of the Study of Religions at Masaryk University (Brno, CZ) as Distinguished Visiting Professor.

Richard Sugarman

Professor Sugarman continues to serve as Director of the Integrated Humanities Program. Professor Sugarman currently has two book projects in progress: the first is entitled *A Transcending Humanism: Emmanuel Levinas and the Jewish Bible*, while the second book is called *Time and Transcendence: Religious Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*.

Kabir Tambar

Professor Tambar's work led to two publications. "Secular Populism and the Semiotics of the Crowd in Turkey," *Public Culture* 21 (3), 2009; "The Aesthetics of Public Visibility: *Alevi Semah* and the Paradoxes of Pluralism in Turkey," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52 (3), 2010. He also organized a panel for the 2009 American Anthropological Association meetings on the subject, "The Social Life of Texts in Turkey," and presented a paper on that panel entitled, "Genres of Sectarianism."

Kevin Trainor

Professor Trainor's primary research and publication activity was focused on the special double issue of the journal *Numen* that he edited and to which he also contributed the introductory article. The issue is dedicated to the cross-cultural and cross-tradition study of relic practices and includes his article entitled "*Pars pro toto: On Comparing Relic Practices*," which examines some of the theoretical issues that arise in comparative analysis, and identifies a number of significant themes and characteristics of the relic practices discussed in the other articles in the journal. The issue will appear in July (*Numen* 57 2010). Professor Trainor also continued as an academic advisor to David Grubin's production of *The Buddha*, a two-hour documentary on the life of the Buddha developed with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He organized a panel on comparative relic practices for the November 2009 American Academy of Religion annual conference. During the Spring 2010 semester Professor Trainor developed and implemented a completely new version of REL 201: Senior Seminar. This summer he will return to Sri Lanka to continue his research on the *Dhammapada* and Buddhist pilgrimage sites.

The Religious Mind: An Interview with Luther Martin

On April 2, 2010, Professor Tambar sat down with Professor Martin to discuss his career, the history of UVM's religion department, and his plans for the future.

Kabir Tambar: You've been at UVM for 43 years. Looking back, how do you think the university and the department have changed?

Luther Martin: Well, back in the seventies, we were called the "Garden of Eden Department," because everyone got along. For some reason, faculty in the religion department still get along. I mean, we all have different approaches, but we respect each other and learn from each other, and that's been great. So looking at all of the changes and some of the problems the university has gone through, I've found it an incredible place to have spent a career, and the department to be very supportive the entire time, and I'm fortunate in having been here. There is not a lot of money floating around as you probably have found out, but there is some support, and there is money here and there, and in general you accomplish what you need to accomplish.

KT: Do you think that the position of the department of religion has shifted much in the university in the time you have been here?

LM: We have many more majors and minors than we used to, I mean we used to have like eight. Nobody goes to a state university to major in religion. They just don't; no one thinks of it. Ninety-five percent of our majors are generated through our intro courses, which is why they're important. When we first began, there was some suspicion about a religion department at a state university, but I think we fairly quickly overcame that. What I hear is our faculty's respected; we're known as a good teaching department, the students by and large seem to like it. Our courses close out as you know. They always have; we've always had full courses. And of course we have our fingers in all kinds of programs on campus, which strategically as well as intellectually has been good. Yeah, no one's ever talked about getting rid of religion.



In celebration of a long and distinguished career.

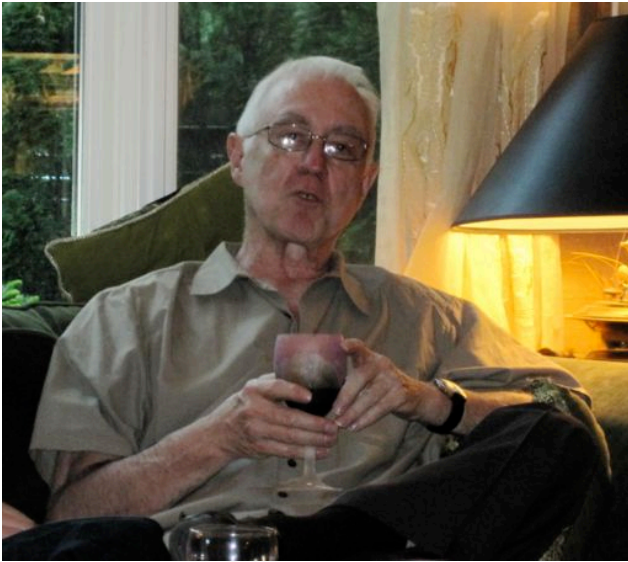
KT: Do you think that large shifts, globally, politically, and in public culture have affected the role of the study of religion at UVM in particular? One can imagine a certain kind of milieu in the sixties and seventies, along with a really dramatic shift that started with the political culture in the eighties, and how religion comes to be perceived and practiced. And then certainly after 9/11. There are certain moments that mark shifts where it seems the study of religion gains a different accent.

LM: During the seventies, we could not have enough seats in Asian Studies. This was during the counterculture, and everyone was Buddhist and this and that. And in the eighties, I'm not sure why, but it shifted, and people started becoming more interested in Western Studies. It may be that the children of the counterculture, not brought up with religion, were saying, "what's this Bible stuff? What's this Christianity stuff?" And then the Bible and Christian studies started filling. And after 9/11... you know we taught Islam in the past, and no one took it. Now, as you know, everybody wants to take it, and there aren't enough people teaching it to hire; there is a wide open job market in Islamic studies. Apart from that, UVM has never had a conservative evangelical Christian constituency, or if they have, they avoid the religion department. I heard at one point there

**Martin Interview,
(continued)**

was a small group and they had us blacklisted, “don’t take these guys’ courses, they’re crazy!”

KT: I’m interested to hear more about your intellectual genealogy. How would you narrate where your thinking has come from and where it’s going, if you go back to your PhD and move from there?



LM: Existential philosophy and phenomenology. Specifically Heidegger, some Husserl, but mainly Heidegger, which I plowed through in German. Existential phenomenology, which is what led into the Eliade stuff. But early on, having plowed through Heidegger, I decided Eliade was not a phenomenologist in any kind of philosophical sense, it just didn’t work. In Biblical studies, I was interested in a school of thought that was basically raising the question of what is the human basis for these kinds of expressions. And existentialism said there seem to be common human responses to our environment, our world, and our situation. And our texts come out of that, deal with it, and reflect on it. Obviously in existentialism there is no supernaturalism, and so right off the bat that side of religion was out the window.

KT: So, this precedes your interest in Hellenistic traditions then.

LM: Well, the Biblical Studies part was New Testament. And I decided fairly early on that it is a very small book that has been studied for 2000 years.

And what the hell else is there to say? I mean, basically, the scholarly study of the Bible was essentially completed in the 19th century. And what Biblical scholars do now is interpret. That is the hermeneutical tradition. But the scholarship on the text, unless a new text is found – and they do discover them – what’s more to say at this point? So then I broadened from the New Testament to Greco-Roman traditions, of which early Christianity is a part. At the time, very little was done on that. I wrote one of the first modern books on it. The year I published my book, two or three other books also came out, so the field started taking off. That was more interesting because not as much was known. It raised interesting questions, comparative questions. Biblical scholars were “seeing the Greco-Roman religions as background for true religion, for Christianity?” And contextualizing early Christianity as an alternative Greco-Roman tradition was not being done, or not being done by many. That was fun.

KT: Where did your interests go from there?

LM: Well when we were approaching the eighties, we got Foucault here. There were a couple of us on the committee then. And initially we said, “well, okay, let’s try to get Levi-Strauss” ... he was kind of big then. He was at his high point. Nobody had heard much of him in religious studies. They still haven’t, it’s kind of a shock. But I thought, it’s a big name, we could learn something, it’d be great, and I got a very nice letter from him saying “thanks so much, it would be great, but I’m too old to do this kind of stuff.” So then we wrote Foucault. Foucault was just beginning to be a big name in the States. And I had read *Madness and Civilization*, in fact I had taught it. In the mysticism-shamanism class, I used it as one of the texts. And I said, why don’t we get Foucault?” And one of the guys on the committee was in history, so he thought that’d be good. So we wrote him, and I got back this nice letter, and he said “I accept *en principe*.” We found out he was going to be at a conference at USC, so we flew out to meet him there initially. Foucault was supposed to come in on a certain evening, and so we decided to go down to the hotel bar and wait to meet him. And in walks this bald-headed guy, leather jacket, chains, and studs. His conference at USC was a disaster. All these people at USC were posturing, and “this is the new wave of postmodernism,” and “here’s the God,”

Martin Interview, (continued)

and he just hated that. Everyone wanted to make an appointment to talk with him, but he refused to talk to anyone for those three or four days except for us.

KT: Why was he more open to talking to you guys?

LM: Because we had set up this thing in advance, not in the sort of exploitative way that other places had treated him. So we negotiated what he wanted, and he said, "I don't want to talk about my thought. I want to sit down with a group of faculty and work on a problem together." So he agreed to come the following year. In the meantime we decided that to get into the seminar with Foucault, you had to be a member of a UVM faculty seminar, and we read his entire corpus. We read it and discussed it. So whoever got through that wasn't going to go in and talk about Foucault's work. We were going to use his work or use our own, and we worked on a problem. It was fantastic. And this is the seminar we published. So that was great. We were the only people that had someone famous here for three weeks. And it made a difference on campus I think; there was a lot more excitement. He went to different departments and spoke with philosophers and so forth, and it was really nice. So when he left, on the way to the airport, I remember, I said "Michel, if we get funding to do this again. Who would you recommend?" He didn't miss a beat, he said "Umberto Eco. He's a friend of mine, and if you invite him, I'll tell him to come." He also told me he would never do anything, ever again, unless it was set up the way we had it set up. He loved it, he had a great time. So I went to the

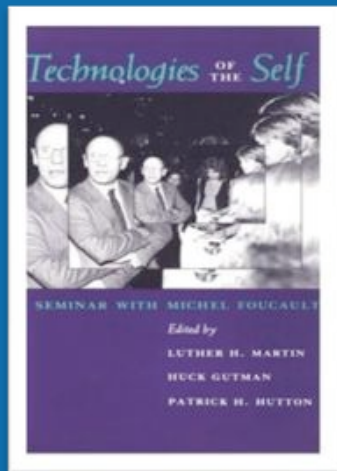
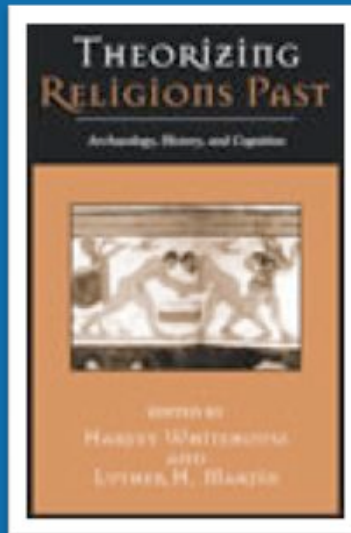
president of UVM, and said, "okay, we want to get Umberto Eco." And he said "Martin, you lucked out the first time with Foucault, but the second time's too much. Who's Umberto Eco? No one's ever heard of him, so we're not going to do it." With the proposal I had turned in, had Umberto Eco accepted, he would

have been on campus the week that he was on the front page of *The New York Times* magazine section for publication of *The Name of the Rose*. Afterwards the president came up to me in the halls and said, "well Luther, you did it again, I should have listened!"

KT: Was it after Foucault, then, that you started thinking about cognitive science?

LM: Yeah. The field of cognitive science in religious studies was essentially founded by Tom Lawson and Bob McCauley. They published a book, *Rethinking Religion*, in 1990, and Tom's been a good friend of mine since '75, maybe earlier, and Bob McCauley was one of his students. What these guys came up with was a theory of ritual, based on what they called a human-action-representation system. Whatever religious ritual is, it's a human action. And therefore it requires an agent, an action, and a recipient of the action. And this is pretty hard-wired. This is a human universal, if you will, in all languages, in all representations of action. What makes it a religious ritual is if a superhuman agent is either the actor or the

recipient of the action. And based on that analysis of a ritual you can make predictions, about what forms it's going to take, the frequency of it, etc. I thought that was fascinating. I mean I didn't *quite* get it, but I still thought it was fascinating.



**Martin Interview,
(continued)**

KT: Didn't it seem a little *too* neat? That there's a set of discreet elements that are pretty limited in number...

LM: It works. You can analyze all rituals this way and if you know what kind of ritual it is you can make predictions. It's interesting to historians. You can get a ritual you don't know much about, like these people I'm working with, we don't know much about their rituals. But if you know it is being done by the god, you can make certain predictions and say "well, does this fit the evidence we have, meager as it is?" You can start making historical reconstructions, which are always iffy, but with a little more confidence because what underlies it is a testable theory. It's been tested by the way, historically and ethnographically. And it seems to work. So I found that fascinating.

KT: What topics are you studying today?

LM: I'm still working on Greco-Roman religions, specifically I am working on the Roman Cult of Mithras. I find the Mithras Cult interesting for several reasons. The Mithras Cult was dated from into the 1st century through the 4th century, when Emperor Theodosius outlawed all non-Christian religions. It was thriving until it was outlawed. It spread throughout the Roman empire to the very extremes. There have been over 700 Mithraea, or Mithras temples, discovered so far. It is estimated that there are 2-3 times more Mithraea that have not yet been discovered. They are along Hadrian's Wall, down the Rhine, down the Danube, in North Africa, Syria, Palestine, as well as in France and Italy - they're all over the place. There was no central administration, no Mithraic pope. These were all small-scale societies, 35 or so initiates operating more or less autonomously. By the way this is how Christianity began: small groups operating autonomously with not much in common in terms of their teachings that we can tell. The second thing that's fascinating is there is a great deal of archeological evidence and iconography, but no texts and no references to texts, from which I've concluded that maybe they just didn't write texts. And I did that on kind of a comparative basis. People say "well, they just didn't survive," but we have surviving texts from all of the other religions in this period, but there's none from the Mithras Cult. For 2000 years scholars tried to

decode the material evidence to find *the* Mithraic myth, and that's nonsense. There is no official orthodox Mithraic myth, because there is no way to control it or preserve it. There is some standardization of the iconography, which is a question I have been working on.

KT: How does one go about studying the standardization of iconography without any textual remains? What sort of connections do you see between the cognitive study of religion and this process of standardizing iconography?

LM: Memory. If you have an absence of text, and you have an absence of administrative control or bureaucracy, and you have a standardized icon - it presents a complex problem. At any Mithraic archeological site, you will find a faithful copy of the tauroctony, its central icon. Now, how does that happen? There's no text, there have not been any artistic templates found - how does this happen? Apparently the only answer is human memory. And how does an image of that complexity get transmitted through memory? That's what I've been working on.

KT: Do you see religious studies as playing an important role in public life in the US?

LM: I see that it could. I don't think it is. I guess it goes back to what I said earlier about the role of the religion department at the University of Vermont, and how we were accepted. They found out we weren't religious teachers, and once they found that out, we were okay. But let's face it, religious studies at any state university in the country is not taken that seriously. And I don't think it is nationally or internationally. And we've been around for what, 150 years? I'm actually part of a crazy small group that is attempting to have a meeting with high ranking people of the Department of Defense who have a great deal of money to spend on research and have a great deal of interest in religion, obviously, and don't have a clue as to how to go about it. They're just asking all the nineteenth century questions. So, thus far, two answers, I guess. In American culture, religion has been dominated by the religious right. American presidents talk to Billy Graham. They don't talk to religion scholars. The other thing that is interesting, I think, is what Dan Dennett discusses in his latest book, *Breaking the Spell*. His basic argument is that religion has a spell

Martin Interview, (continued)

around it; it is protected, and it cannot be studied critically like any other topic in the university. Any other topic is up for grabs, but religion is considered to be good just by being religion. He calls people like members of the American Academy of Religion, of which there are some 8000 members, "the friends of religion." And it got me thinking: how come in a religion department, nowhere that I know of, is atheism a topic of discussion. Biblical studies is taught all over the place. Why? Only because in the Christian West it's considered an authoritative, revealed teaching. Now everyone's got to study it. Even if you're doing it critically, historically, it remains *central* to all religion programs. You've got a religious bias. The only point I'm making is that if you have an academic study of religion that includes biblical studies, or Christianity, or Buddhism, why not atheism?

KT: You began your career with a degree in theology: how do you view the role of theology in religious studies today?

LM: The interesting thing about theology is it's always playing catch-up and it's always masking. You know, you read theology and — ah! They're still defending supernatural authority. They're still defending revelation over empirical studies. It's that simple; you have to make a choice. The scientific way of knowing is to make the unknown known. Whether you can do that or not; whether it's finally achievable, that's the goal. The ideal. The goal of a religious epistemology is to preserve an autonomy for the unknown. They're incompatible; they're inconsistent; they can't be reconciled: pick one.

Note: Many thanks to Michael Malamud for transcribing the interview.

Special Events & Lectures



Department Picnic

The Department held its annual picnic on September 14, 2009. Students and faculty mingled and discussed their plans for the new academic year while enjoying hamburgers, hotdogs and other delicious treats!

On March 18 the Religion Department hosted Dr. Daniel Smail, Professor of History at Harvard University, who delivered a lecture entitled "*Is Culture Just a Drug? History, Neuroscience, and the 'Great Transformation.'*"

Professor Trainor led a campus screening and discussion of the PBS documentary *The Buddha* on April 7. For more information about Professor Trainor's work as a consultant for this documentary project see his interview with the University Communications Office here:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmpr/?Page=News&storyID=16392>

Our Staff

Fran Keppler

Fran Keppler has been the Administrative Assistant to the Religion Department since 2005. From answering student questions, to her many administrative responsibilities, Fran is a central part of the Department's success. Thank you Fran!

Report from Singapore

By Professor Borchert

I am currently a visiting research fellow at the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. The Centre is devoted to examining both intra-Asian interactions both historically and in the modern period, as well as ways that Asians have perceived and described Asia themselves. The Centre grew out of efforts by the Indian government to open up a modern version of Nalanda University, the great international Buddhist university-city that thrived for much of the first millennium CE. Singapore is a particularly interesting place to have such a center because it is very much at the crossroads of trade and cultural interactions between Indian, Chinese and Southeast Asian communities.

One of the projects that I am engaged in here is a consideration of how notions of Buddhism as a universal religion interact with local politics and national regimes of governance to produce Buddhist cultures in particular locations. In Singapore this manifests in some interesting ways, which have to do with the way the state supports a system of religious and racial harmony. All religions here are understood as being equal and great effort is put into creating and maintaining a balance between religions. For example, space for temples and churches is apportioned very carefully by the state, and in February there was a major brouhaha locally when a local evangelical pastor put up some clips on

YouTube which showed him ridiculing Buddhism and Taoism (he was forced by the government to apologize in a very public way).

Language is also an important part of this particular dynamic. I am currently doing research in the



educational systems of two different temples. One is a Theravada Buddhist temple, which is normally associated with Burma, Sri Lanka and other parts of Southeast Asia, that caters largely to local Chinese Singaporeans. They are attracted to the temple, I've been told, not just because Theravada Buddhist claims to being the original form of Buddhism, but also because they teach in English. This caters to a Singaporean community that, while Chinese, has been educated in English and whose Chinese language skills are either insufficient or a different dialect. The other temple is a

Mahayana Buddhist temple that is running a school to produce Chinese Buddhist monks who specialize in English. It is accredited not by the Singaporean Ministry of Education but by Kelaniya University in Sri Lanka and 95% of its students are from the People's Republic of China. While my work here is still preliminary, at a bare minimum, these temples show us that the ways we often think about a religion such as Buddhism, across either sectarian or national lines, is woefully insufficient to understand how Buddhists actually act.

Student News

This spring students in the Senior Seminar undertook intensive research projects on a number of fascinating topics:

“The Bureaucratization of the Chinese Buddhist Underworld” by Tyler Abbott

“The Essentials of the Organism and Models of Religion” by Jordan Lafland

“Personal Visionary Experience in Apocalyptic Literature: A New Perspective” by Brendan Dempsey

“Homosexuality & Judaism: An Exploration” by Sarah Baddeley

“iReligion: Religious Modes of Apple, Inc.” by David Boyd

“Yoga and Religion in Dialogue” by Elizabeth McCallion

“Grains from Grass: Reevaluating the Relationship Between Religion and the State During the Russian Revolutionary Period (1917-1921)” by Tristan Whitehouse

“Eyes of the Divine: Image Consecration in Hinduism and Sinhalese Buddhism” by Jenni Gagnon

“Paul Carus and the American Buddha” by Lea McLellan



Members of the Spring, 2010 Senior Seminar (l-r): Front: Elizabeth McCallion, Jenni Gagnon, Danielle Proudman, Professor Trainor. Middle: Brendan Dempsey, Lea McLellan, Sarah Baddeley, David Boyd. Back Row: Sunshine Thunderchief, Tyler Abbott, Matt Townsend, Jordan Lafland, Tristan Whitehouse.

“The Spirituals: Establishing The Black Church Through Musical Tradition” by Matt Townsend

Congratulations to all graduating seniors!

Outstanding Senior Major Award



Elizabeth McCallion

Elizabeth McCallion is a John Dewey Honors college student with majors in religion and psychology. She is originally from Westchester, NY but has made a new home for herself here in Vermont. Throughout her four years at UVM, Elizabeth has worked closely with Professors Bill Paden and Kevin Trainor studying comparative theory and focusing specifically on Buddhist and Hindu religious practices and their relationship to the modern West. She has integrated her passion for religious studies with her interests in the treatment of anxiety disorders and has just finished her thesis project in the psychology department looking at the effects of mindfulness therapy in its ability to reduce anxiety. In addition to being granted the Outstanding Major in Religion award, Elizabeth has been awarded the George W. Albee award for promise in the prevention of psychopathology. Upon graduating, Elizabeth plans to obtain her PhD in Clinical Psychology and hopes to continue exploring how religious practices can be helpful in cultivating psychological wellness.

Stay Up to Date!

Wondering about upcoming lectures and events? Want to see what new courses are being offered in the Department of Religion? Find out the latest news about the Department of Religion at the University of Vermont by checking out our new website:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~religion/>

Support Undergraduate Research!

The Department invites donations in honor of William E. Paden in support of undergraduate research in Religion at the University of Vermont. Donations to this fund will be used to help students attend conferences and to defray costs associated with student presentations. If you are interested in making a contribution please write a check to the University of Vermont Department of Religion. Checks should be mailed to:

UVM Development Office
411 Main St.
Burlington, VT 05405

Keep in Touch!

Now it's your turn! We want to hear from you. Please get in touch, by phone, mail, or email, and tell us about you and your family, your latest successes, career changes, and travels. We look forward to publishing alumni updates in future issues. Submit your news via email to religion@uvm.edu or by regular mail to Department of Religion, University of Vermont, 481 Main Street, Burlington, VT 05405.

Name:

Email:

Class of:

Current Address:

News:

I want to know more about:
