



Edited by Maya Donovan '23

Summer 2021: Majors on the Move!



Religion majors at Carleton were busy this summer despite the continuing difficulties of the COVID epidemic. With a variety of projects from internships to collaborating with faculty, students within the department have been hard at work.

Dawson Eriksen '23 and Connor Jansen '24 - This summer Dawson and Connor worked alongside Professor Michael McNally to expand his public scholarship project, ReligionsMN. ReligionsMN is a website with online exhibits highlighting the rich religious diversity of Minnesota. Covering an incredible

variety of faiths, issues and topics, ReligionsMN collaborates with local communities and organizations to improve access to religious scholarship. Dawson and Connor spent the summer preparing articles for publication and even writing their own. Most of the articles were written by previous students of Professor McNally and Professor Shana Sippy. Dawson completed a study of queer and

non-binary expression in Dakota and Ojibwe historical narratives, while Connor explored the ways in which religious observances evolved during COVID. Their work was funded by the Dean of Students Office, allowing them to give their undivided attention to the project. ReligionsMN is also funded by the Minnesota Humanities Center, Carleton College and The Mellon Digital Humanities Project.



Kamala GhaneaBassiri '22 - Kamala worked as a curatorial intern for the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education. Kamala aided the museum in educating the public about Jewish culture and the Holocaust. Based in the heart of

Portland, the museum hosts a variety of exhibits introducing Jewish life and remembering the Holocaust. The museum describes its duty to study the holocaust as a “responsibility in an interconnected world where injustice persists on a grand scale. We study the Holocaust to study our connections to each other.”

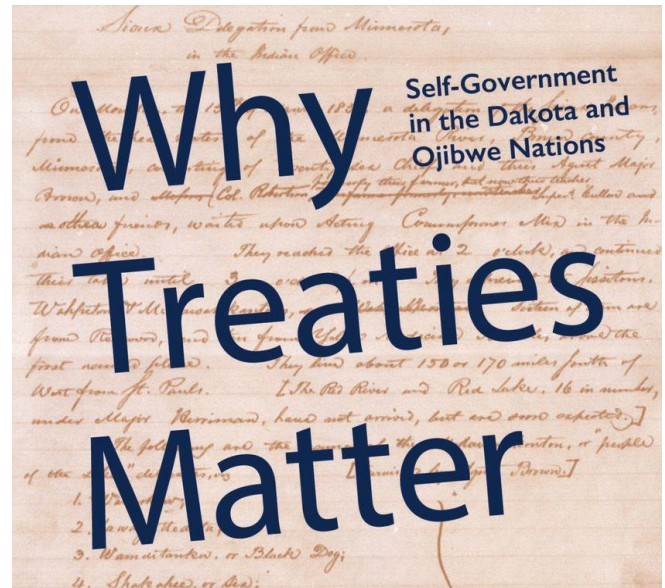
Karina Yum - Karina participated in the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) Program at the University of Chicago this summer. The program aims to prepare talented students from minority backgrounds to become university faculty



and to expand diversity in higher education. Karina’s project explored how deconversion works in the modern age by looking at ex-evangelical media and comparing the language and strategies of evangelicals to those of ex-evangelicals. She argues that “deconversion from evangelicalism as a faith in which rhetoric and aesthetics can be influential tools for conversion is a far more complex matter than a simple change in religious belief.” Her work focuses on ex-evangelical media found on the internet, and the ways it recommends its consumers to ‘deconstruct’ and rethink their faith.

“Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nations”

This fall, “Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nations,” traveled to Carleton’s Weitz Center for Creativity from September 9 to October 17, 2021. It was an exhibit exploring “relationships between Dakota and Ojibwe Indian Nations and the U.S. government in this place we now call Minnesota.” The project began as a collaborative effort when “tribes residing in Minnesota approved the partnership of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Minnesota Humanities Center, and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian.” Relying on the knowledge and perspective of the Dakota and Ojibwe, the exhibit portrayed how treaties have impacted and continue to impact the lifeways and lands of the Native tribes in Minnesota after they were signed more than 150 years ago.



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Professors Michael McNally from the Religion Department and Meredith McCoy from the History Department planned programming and drafted panels for the exhibit explaining the importance of sovereignty and land in discussions of treaties and their impact today. In Carleton’s Land Acknowledgement, “Why Treaties Matter” is part of seeking “honest storytelling” about the places we now call Carleton, Northfield, and Minnesota.”

As part of the exhibit, Carleton supplemented “Why Treaties Matter” with a keynote address by Gwen Westerman, an enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota Oyate and a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. Westerman co-authored *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota*, which won a 2013 Minnesota Book Award, and a 2014 Hognander Minnesota History Award. In her talk, Westerman discussed not only why treaties matter but also why the *land* matters. In describing her connection to the land in the Twin Cities as a place of creation and a place of near destruction, Westerman said it is a sad, sacred, and happy place “where Dakota became Dakota.” Westerman underscored that “as empathetic people, we have a moral obligation to care about people and what happens to them regardless of the time frame.”

In continuing the campus dialogue, Anton Treuer, Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University and Editor of the Oshkaabewis Native Journal, gave his convocation address “The Language Warrior’s Manifesto: How to Keep Our Languages Alive No Matter the Odds,” and discussed the relationship between culture and language, how language loss happens, and how to fight it. Carleton also hosted members of the Prairie Island Indian Community on Indigenous Peoples’ Day on October 11 which featured a small, private ceremony between Prairie Island’s President Buck and Carleton’s President Byerly, the set up of a tipi by Dakota Education professionals, a talk focusing on the local Indigenous history and archaeology, and a community dinner of soup and fry bread prepared by Chef Phil White, with support from Carleton’s Bon Appetit staff.

Kate Hoeting ‘19: An Alumni Feature

Kate Hoeting ‘19 (a former Religion Department student departmental advisor) graduated with a Master in Theological Studies from Harvard University this past spring where she focused on religion and reproductive health. She is now the writer and managing editor at Catholics for Choice (CFC), a nonprofit that lifts up the voices of the majority of Catholics who believe in reproductive freedom. Kate manages CFC’s magazine, writes their long-form publications, and provides editorial expertise across multiple departments.



During her time as a religion major at Carleton, Kate was granted the Larson International Fellowship and walked 200 miles of El Camino de Santiago alone while interviewing nonreligious pilgrims about their experience walking this traditionally Catholic pilgrimage. Her senior comps project, “Walking to a New Self: An Ethnography of Spiritual but Not Religious Pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago,” examined the identities and ritual creativity of these “spiritual but not religious” pilgrims. Her comps won the Bardwell Smith Prize for Excellence in the Study of Religion.

Kate was a Student Departmental Advisor (SDA). As for her coursework, she fondly

remembers Lori Pearson’s Liberation Theologies, Michael McNally’s Native American Religions, and Sonja Anderson’s Monks and Mystics. She thinks about what she learned in those classes almost every day. Other highlights include “seeing the Saint John’s Bible on a field trip for Sonja Anderson’s class, going to Carbone’s with the religion majors, and the absolutely unhinged obsession we had with Robert Orsi.” When asked what inspired her to pursue religion beyond Carleton, Kate responded, “If I learned anything in those four years in the Carleton religion department, it was that you’re never done learning. Divinity school allowed me to spend time with community organizers and coalition builders who helped me apply my Carleton education to my work in reproductive health.”

Kate is also an abortion doula and co-created the Carleton Advocacy Network of Doulas (CAN-DO), one of the first collegiate abortion doula coalitions in 2016. She has served hundreds of people, many of whom were Catholic, in the clinic during the procedure. For Kate, “Understanding religion is an absolute necessity for any healthcare worker. When a patient looked up at me after the procedure and asked ‘Am I going to hell for this?’ I knew what to say. When another patient asked if the doctor and I could pray with her, I knew how to act. That’s a pretty special skill, and I learned it from studying religion.”

Writing and editing for Catholics for Choice is Kate’s “actual dream job,” and she remarked that “if I hadn’t majored in religion at Carleton, there’s no way I would be doing this work. The incredible professors at Carleton sharpened my writing skills, taught me to read in ridiculous quantities, and showed me how to talk about religion in nuanced and respectful ways.” Catholics for Choice just finished their first magazine issue and Kate is excited to read it in print.

Faculty Research Symposium: What is a Text? What is an Author?

This Fall term, the campus was graced by a Faculty Symposium from the Humanities Center’s Seminar “What is a Text? What is an Author?” Our very own Asuka Sango, Associate Professor of Religion, served as an organizer of this cohort alongside Katie Ryor, Tanaka Professor of International Understanding and Art History. The seminar was an exemplary model of interdisciplinary work, hosting professors from Archaeology, English, Art History, Religion, and Asian Studies.

A key theme throughout the symposium was to reexamine the boundary between a text and an artifact while looking at unknown authors behind them. For example, Assistant Professor of Art History, Jessica Keating discussed how the creation of Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf II’s inventory of art melds authorship and stewardship in ways that go beyond curatorial and into the creative. Professors Alex Knodell and Austin Mason argued that authorship could be problematized in studying archaeological objects in Classical Greek and Viking contexts, respectively. Although these material objects are “authorless” and cannot be attributed to a single author, they nonetheless can be “read” like texts to learn about people who produced, used, and circulated these objects as well as their society.

Indeed, the question of “What is an Author?” is fundamental to the ways modern scholars create knowledge. The participating faculty each approached this question to expand beyond traditional methods in their respective disciplines. George Shuffelton, Professor of English, challenged previous readings of the *London Chronicles*, year-by-year accounts of the events of London, and introduced “distant reading” as a new way of reading this text, which challenges the discrete and minute focus of “close-reading.”

Assistant Professor of Chinese, Lei Yang examined Sima Qian’s (145–86 BCE) historiography to explore the rise of authorship in Han Dynasty China. Prior to Sima Qian, Chinese historical texts were composed by multiple authors, and they were written on bamboo strips, the order of which was repeatedly rearranged; but Sima Qian established the norms of history-writing in China and became the single author of the first of the official dynastic histories thereby giving rise to the idea of authorship.

Finally, Professor Asuka Sango from the Religion Department examined the medieval manuscripts produced by Buddhist scholar monks and explored the limits of the modern notion of authorship, the idea of an individual author who both produces and owns a unified body of original writing such as a “book.” Many of the medieval Buddhist scholars did not “author” their texts in this sense; but rather, they copied and edited them. They did not produce their original words in the main body of the texts, but left their names and personal reflections in a brief section at the end called a “colophon.” To the modern reader, a colophon is equivalent to a mere copyright page with bibliographical data, but in medieval Japan, it recorded the transmission of a manuscript while legitimizing the authority of those who were worthy of receiving the transmission.

The Faculty Seminar provides a wonderful opportunity for faculty to collaborate and share ideas while encouraging meaningful dialogue between different humanities disciplines. Participating faculty are then able to further their own research and bring their discoveries to their classes, enriching the broader Carleton intellectual community.

Professor Lori Pearson Receives Summer Stipend from the NEH

Lori Pearson, Professor of Religion, has been working on her recent book project *Sexuality and Secularization*, and has received a Summer Stipend for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). This stipend supported her in exploring how the work of Marianne Weber influenced 20th-century religious and social theory. This project explores how debates about women’s rights informed the study of religion in Germany alongside highlighting Marianne’s contributions to the field. The Summer Stipend helped support her work on her final chapter.

The NEH Summer Stipend “aims to stimulate new research in the humanities and its publications,” and supports continuous, full-time dedication to humanities projects at any stage of development over the course of two consecutive months.

Back in 2014 Professor Pearson was awarded a New Directions Fellowship from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for this project, and the NEH Summer Stipend helped her bring it to its fruition. Professor Pearson continues to expand scholarship and discourse on modern philosophy of religion, social theory, race, and feminist thought.

Fall 2021 Course Offerings

RELG 100: Art and Religion

RELG 100: Christianity and Colonialism

RELG 110: Understanding Religions

RELG 120: Introduction to Judaism

RELG 153: Introduction to Buddhism

RELG 227: Liberation Theologies

RELG 237: Yoga: Religion, History, Practice

RELG 270: Philosophy of Religion