

Spring 2022

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CARLETON COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

Edited by Maya Donovan '23

Interview with New Associate Chaplain Rev. Todd Campbell Jr. '16



Edited lightly for clarity and length

Why did you decide to major in Religion?

Going into college, I wanted to major in psychology and be a psychiatrist later down the line. I was totally against studying religion. At the time, my faith was very personal, and it just seemed too personal to be probed at, so I ran away from the religion department for a little while. Then I took Introduction to Christianity with Professor Phillip Francis, fell in love with it, and realized this is what I want to do. I started off with psychology, then went to sociology, and then religion. When I got to religion, I realized I could wrap all of these interests up in one department.

What, if anything, did you learn in the Carleton Religion department that was helpful in graduate school, but also in your work experience down the line?

The religion department really prepared me for grad school, and I don't say that just because

I'm a product of the department. I would accredit some of my ability to be open to, empathize with, and understand others to the religion department as well. Because of the array of different traditions they offer classes in, I was able to immerse myself in those different traditions with an open heart, seeking to learn and understand. And now I do it as a job.

What are your goals for your work at Carleton?

My hope in my position is to encourage students to think about what it looks like to rest so we can fully show up for our work and for our place—whether that means going to a particular worship gathering, seeking out SHAC, OHP, or finding moments to meditate or walk in the Arb. We don't have a huge culture of rest and self-care here at Carleton because we're always on the go. This idea of rest, or coming home to ourselves, is so important. I also hope to connect and pour into BIPOC communities on campus and create spaces where they feel safe and comfortable to practice, seek, and make meaning.

What part of the work you do really excites you, at this job and previous ones?

I love journeying with people. I love doing life with people in moments when people are at their best and at their worst, walking alongside them, and witnessing folks coming home to themselves. For me, what that looks like is seeing a person fully live in who they are and who they want to be, be at peace with themselves and with the world, and be open to what life is laying out before them. I have had the great opportunity to witness that for some years now. And also, I love seeing some people come alive and find joy in the work that they do. There's a quote by Howard Thurman that says, "Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive." If we would all just take that on and operate from that end, I think the world would be a much better place. The other thing I find exciting is just working with students, hearing their stories, and seeing what they are up to in the world and what they want to do with their lives. Carls are really phenomenal people and the Carls that I know do really phenomenal work in the world. To help mold them or walk alongside them is a huge honor for me.

Do you have any book recommendations?

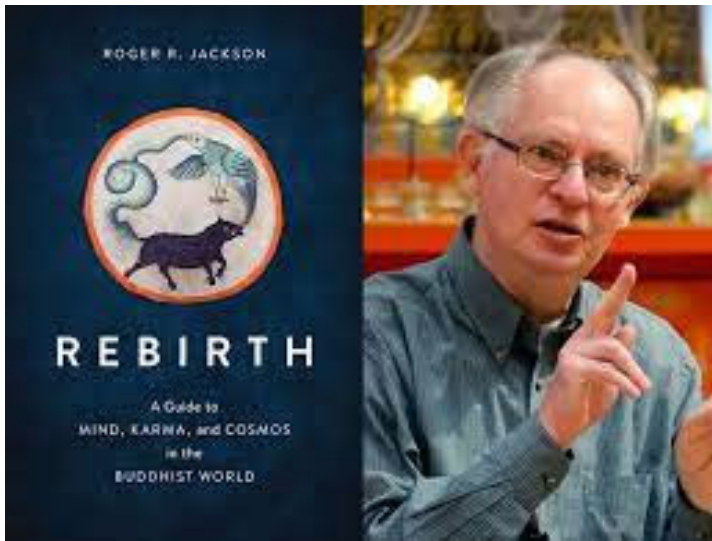
Meditations of the Heart by Howard Thurman and *This Here Flesh* by Cole Arthur Riley.

Welcome Visiting Assistant Professor Jonathan Dickstein!

Jonathan Dickstein (University of Pennsylvania, B.A.; University of Colorado, Boulder, M.A.; University of California, Santa Barbara, Ph.D.) specializes in Religion and Ecology, South Asian religious traditions, and Comparative Ethics. His dissertation, titled "Animals in Hindu South Asia: From Cosmos to Slaughterhouse," details the positions and plights of domesticated animals in Hindu religious cosmologies, ethics, and practices. Professor Dickstein works with scholars across disciplines to foreground the relevance of human-animal relations and food production and consumption to pressing ecological and social justice issues. He enjoys working with students to explore how religion relates to humans' relationships with other humans, other animals, and the natural world as a whole.



New Book by Emeritus Professor Roger Jackson



Roger Jackson, John W. Nason Professor of Asian Religions, Emeritus, recently published his new book, *Rebirth: A Guide to Mind, Karma, and Cosmos in the Buddhist World* (2022). In late March, Professor Jackson gave a book reading at Content Bookstore to Carleton faculty and Northfield community members.

Rebirth began as a chapter contribution but turned into what Professor Jackson called a “pandemic project,” and took off into a comprehensive engagement with the notion of rebirth from the past to the present in the Buddhist world. Through his book, Professor Jackson guides readers to understand the

history and scope of rebirth in various Buddhist traditions, tracing a range of Buddhist views on what being reborn means and what happens after death. He also explores the modern scientific evidence of reincarnation and its implications for how rebirth is described and understood. *Rebirth* has received an abundance of praise and is sure to enhance both public and scholarly discourse on rebirth and Buddhist worldviews.

RELG 282: Samurai: Ethics of Death and Loyalty

By Molly Zuckerman '22

This term, I have had the huge privilege of participating in RELG 282: “Samurai: Ethics of Death and Loyalty,” designated as an ACE (Academic Civic Engagement) course. Central to the course is not only Professor Sango’s Monday and Friday classes on the history and culture of samurai but also our Wednesday kyudo lessons with Carly and John Born, in partnership with the Center for Community and Civic Engagement (CCCE).

Kyudo is an 800 year old tradition of archery and a defining feature of what it meant to be a samurai for a long time. Carly and John, who helped found the Minnesota Kyudo Renmei Chapter, are our Senseis (meaning “teachers” in Japanese) and have coached us for the past eight weeks. Kyudo is difficult, and multiple of my classmates have expressed that learning the basics of the martial arts has given them a fundamentally deeper understanding of our regular class material, and vice versa. The ACE component of this course and how it ties in seamlessly with course material has definitely made this one of the most informative, creative, and interesting classes I have taken at Carleton.



At the very end of the term, we got to meet with Ogasawara-Sensei, a kyudo master from one of the most renowned families in Japanese kyudo history. What was so amazing and interesting about his visit is that it seemed to tie all of our coursework together, and it was an incredible honor to meet him. He came to two class sessions. The first day, he emphasized the militaristic aspect of the Ogasawara tradition, answering student questions about kyudo and martial arts. The second day, however, he taught us how to tie knots and do other traditional crafts. This was completely in line with Professor Sango's emphasis on the

samurai duality of martial and cultural arts, and felt like a really fulfilling way to wrap up this course. Although I am a PoliSci major, I can sincerely say that this has been one of the most eye opening and enriching courses at Carleton. I would encourage anyone, even non-religion majors, to consider it!

RELG 285 Mosque Visit

For his Introduction to Islam class, Professor Kambiz GhaneaBassiri asked his students to go in groups to visit mosques around the city and write a short blog post about their experiences. At the most basic level, the purposes of the mosque visit exercise were to humanize religious and cultural differences and to get students to see the skills and resources they have for crossing cultural and religious boundaries. "For this reason," Professor GhaneaBassiri said, "I encourage Muslim students to attend a mosque or Sufi ceremony that is different from what they are used to." At another level, the purpose of the assignment was to introduce students to yet another rich source for understanding how Islam is practiced in varying contexts. For example, Zak Sather, one of the students in class, said, "I was pretty shocked by the diversity of the place. There were Muslims from all over the world, we had dinner with a Minnesotan who converted from Catholicism and a man who grew up in Pakistan, and the Imam told us more than 17 different ethnicities were represented in his congregation."

Through analyzing their visits to mosques, students had an opportunity to put to test the knowledge they have gained about Islam from the course. Professor GhaneaBassiri explained, "I hope that seeing Islam in practice in a context with which students are familiar would cement in their minds the fact that religions are dynamic, and that, in their study of religion, they need to develop skills to relate what they learn in classrooms and books about religious doctrines, rituals, and beliefs to the varying ways they are practiced in different places and times."



Maxine Rosenfeld, another student in his class, explained, “Prior to this visit, I had been inside a few mosques before while traveling with my family, but had never observed prayer. Also, I hadn't visited a mosque since starting my religious studies at Carleton, so I feel like I came to this particular experience as a very different person than I had been during my previous visits.” Ashley Rosenberg also had a similar experience: “I had visited a mosque before this, but in the context of the group I was with, I was treating the mosque as a tourist attraction, such as some of the famous mosques and architectural sites in Spain and Turkey, as opposed to as a space for worship. This visit was very different though, as I entered the space with the intention of observing prayer and speaking with people who attend the mosque.”

In addition to approaching this exercise from the academic perspective, many students experienced the hospitality of members of the mosques they visited. “We had a great time visiting the Anjuman-e Asghari mosque in Brooklyn Park,”

Maxine recalled. “Right away, we were welcomed by several women in the community who showed us around and answered many of our questions. After prayers ended, we were introduced to the Imam, who spoke to us about his role in the community and answered even more of our questions. Before we left, we were offered wonderful home-cooked food for our drive home!” The mosque visits provided students with a unique opportunity to observe Islam in its lived contexts and apply their classroom learning to the real world.

Fall 2022 Religion Courses

- ❖ **RELG 100.01: American Pilgrimages**
- ❖ **RELG 100.02: Buddhism, Science, Society**
- ❖ **RELG 110: Understanding Religion**
- ❖ **RELG 111: Introduction to the Qu’ran**
- ❖ **RELG 152: Japanese Religion and Culture**
- ❖ **RELG 269: Food, Justice, and Nonviolence: Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Perspectives**
- ❖ **RELG 273: Religious Approaches to Death**
- ❖ **RELG 278: Semantics of Love in Sufism**

Religion Department Comps Presentation Titles

RELIGION SENIOR COMPS PRESENTATION
Can Exodus Be a National Unifying Myth?

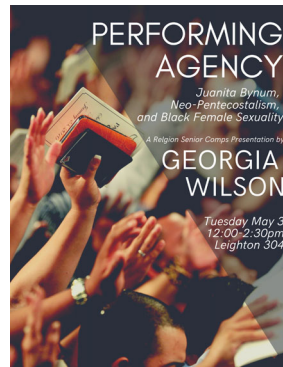


Claire Neid '22
 Thursday, April 28
 12:00-12:30 pm
 Leighton 304

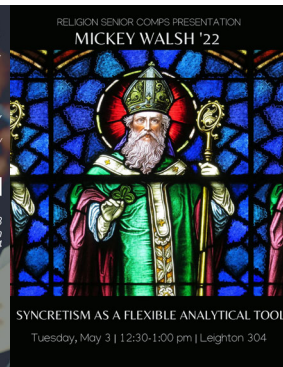
RELIGION SENIOR COMPS PRESENTATION
Holy War and Martyrdom in Usāmah ibn-Munqidh's Kitāb Al-Itibār
 Kamala GhaneaBassiri '22



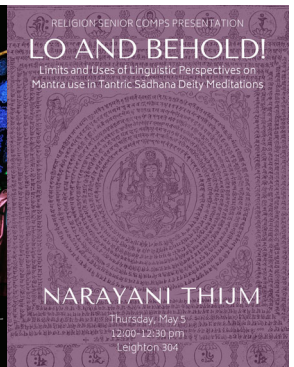
Thursday, April 28
 12:30-1:00 pm - Leighton 304



RELIGION SENIOR COMPS PRESENTATION
PERFORMING AGENCY
 Juanita Bynum, Neo-Pentecostalism, and Black Female Sexuality
 A Religion Senior Comps Presentation by
GEORGIA WILSON
 Tuesday, May 3
 12:00-2:30pm
 Leighton 304



RELIGION SENIOR COMPS PRESENTATION
MICKEY WALSH '22
SYNCRETISM AS A FLEXIBLE ANALYTICAL TOOL
 Tuesday, May 3 | 12:30-1:00 pm | Leighton 304



RELIGION SENIOR COMPS PRESENTATION
LO AND BEHOLD!
 Limits and Uses of Linguistic Perspectives on Mantra use in Tantric Sādhana Deity Meditations
NARAYANI THIJM
 Thursday, May 5
 12:00-12:30 pm
 Leighton 304

❖ = Distinction in comps ➤ = Bardwell Smith Prize for Excellence in the Study of Religion

❖ **Can Exodus Be a National Unifying Myth?** || Claire Neid

The Ibra in Usāmah ibn-Munqidh's Kitāb Al-Itibār || Kamala GhaneaBassiri

Performing Agency: Juanita Bynum, Neo-Pentecostalism, and Black Female Sexuality || Georgia Wilson

Syncretism as a Flexible Analytical Tool for the Study of Christianity in Ireland || Mickey Walsh

➤ **LO AND BEHOLD! Limits and Uses of Linguistic Perspectives on Mantra use in Tantric Sādhana Deity Meditations** || Narayani Thijm