

The 21st Annual Religion Graduate Student Symposium  
at Florida State University

# CRISIS & CALAMITY

THE AESTHETICS OF APOCALYPSE,  
IMMORALITY, AND CONSPIRACY

**FEBRUARY 9-10, 2024**

**With a Keynote Lecture:**  
**CONSPIRACY, ATROCITY, & 'RITUAL'**

BY DR. DAVID FRANKFURTER, BOSTON UNIVERSITY

And a roundtable discussion of "Teaching in Contentious Classrooms"  
with Dr. Frankfurter, Dr. Michael Muhammad Knight (UCF) and Dr.  
Tracie Mahaffey (FSU)





# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**Friday, February 9**

**Block 1**

**12:00–2:15 pm**

**Panel: The Making of Identity**  
**SSB 201**

Respondent: Dr. Shulamit Shinnar, *Florida State University*

Moderator: Jesse Lee, *Florida State University*

**“Diseased History: Religious Engagement in History During Cholera Epidemics”**

David Reed Hall, *Florida State University*

**“Posthumanism: Response to the Anthropocentric Crisis”**

Kaitlynn Balmer, *Florida State University*

**“Orthodox Christians of the Circumcision?”**

Alexander Miguel, *Florida State University*

**“Maternal Bodies and Conspiracy of Representation: Misogyny, Motherhood and Mothering in Early Christian Texts”**

Florence Egbeyale, *Florida State University*

**Panel: Religion, Violence, and Abuse**  
**SSB 208**

Respondent: Dr. Michael McVicar, *Florida State University*

Moderator: Dr. Martin Kavka, *Florida State University*

**“A Study on Hate Crimes in U.S. Gateway Cities: Analyzing Incidents Motivated by Race and Religion”**

Fadime Apaydin, *University of California, Riverside*

**“The Convergence of Transhumanist Ideals and National Identity: A Study of  
Liberland”**

Summer Boucher, *Florida State University*

**Block 2**

**2:30– 4:45 pm**

**Panel: Knowledge and Power  
SSB 201**

Respondent: Dr. Rosemary Kellison, *Florida State University*

Moderator: Ethan Butler, *Florida State University*

**Enabling Constraints For the Time Being: On the Exploitation of Policing  
Infrastructures as an ‘Extension of Leisure’ in Dawoud Bey’s Three Women at the  
Parade, from Harlem (1977 - 1978)**

Hassan Henderson-Lott, *Rice University*

**Power's Open Secret**

Patrick Dunn, *Ohio State University*

**Foucault’s Aesthetics of Existence: A New Way of Being**

Gregory Han, *Rice University*

**The Crisis of Lust in American Conservative Evangelical Sexuality**

Rebekah Mui Pei Ern, *Virginia Tech*

**“Let Not the Egyptians Say”: A Pragmatist Political Theology of Reputation in  
the Hebrew Bible**

Jennifer Greenberg, *Brown University*

**Panel: Meta-Theory, Method, and the Production of Knowledge  
SSB 208**

Respondent: Dr. Sonia Hazard, *Florida State University*

Moderator: Devin Burns, *Florida State University*

**“Rawlsian Religion in a Climate of Crisis: Political Liberalism’s Answer to Apocalypse”**

Rebekah J. Gordon, *Florida State University*

**“Laugh During Wartime: Hubristic Laughter in Josephus’ Jewish War”**

Tommy Woodward, *Florida State University*

**“Post-Truth, Post-Fact, and the American Far-Right”**

Spencer Kunz, *Florida State University*

**“Political Demonology: Notes Toward a New Kind of Political Inquiry”**

Michael T. Froid, *Syracuse University*

**Keynote Address and Opening Remarks**

**5:00–6:30 pm**

**SSB 201/203**

Opening Remarks and Leo F. Sandon Award Announcement

Emily Olsen, *Florida State University*

**“Conspiracy, Atrocity, & ‘Ritual’”**

Dr. David Frankfurter, *Boston University*

David Frankfurter holds the William Goodwin Aurelio Chair of the Appreciation of Scripture at Boston University. His academic interests involve theoretical issues like the place of magic in religion, the relationship of religion and violence, the nature of Christianization, and the representation of evil in culture. He teaches courses on Western religions, comparative religions, Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, and the documents of early Christianity, including extra-canonical sources, magical texts, and saints’ lives.

**Dinner Reception**

**6:30pm–8:30pm**

**SSB 208/218**

**Saturday, February 10**

**Breakfast and Coffee**

**9:00–9:30 am**

**SSB 219**

**Block 3**

**9:30–11:45am**

**Panel: Ecology and Eschatology**

**SSB 201**

Respondent: Dr. Martin Kavka, *Florida State University*

Moderator: Joshua Carpenter, *Florida State University*

**“Aviral Godāvarī: Where Religion and River Revival Meet”**

Amee Parikh, *Florida State University*

**“Wiccan Apocalypticism”**

Humberto Perez, *Florida State University*

**“When Drinking Water, Consider The Source”**

Marah Litchford, *Florida State University*

**Panel: Self-Narration: Ideology and Secrecy**

**SSB 208**

Respondent: Dr. Andrew Durdin, *Florida State University*

Moderator: Tommy Woodward, *Florida State University*

**“Confrontation or Reconciliation? Two Reactions to the Roman Empire in the Acts of Paul and the Acts of Peter”**

Jerry Kou, *Florida State University*

**“Ibrahim George Kheiralla and Early American Baha'i Identity”**

Alana Dickey, *Florida State University*

**“Interspirituality and the “Death” of Religion”**

Cooper Sims-West, *Naropa University*

**“(Re-)Building Multicultural Identity in the Face of Calamity: The Story of Elephantine Jews”**

Jordan Barr, *Florida State University*

**Block 4  
12:00pm–2:15pm**

**Panel: Space, Symbolology, and Sensing Religion  
SSB 208/218**

Respondent: Dr. Michael Muhammad Knight, *University of Central Florida*

Moderator: Will Livingston, *Florida State University*

**“Somebody Hears You: Surveillance and Horror in Vienna Teng's "Hymn of Acxiom"”**

Joshua Carpenter & Zachary Lloyd, *Florida State University*

**“Between Urbanity and Religiosity: Exploring the Symbolism of Mosques in Lagos, Nigeria”**

Ridwan Balogun, *Florida State University*

**“Decoding Indigenous Mathematics: Unveiling the Symbolism in the Great Mosque of Djenne”**

Blake Garland-Tirado, *Indiana University*

**“Gods Bound and Bathed: The Manipulation of Cult Images as a Ritual Response to Disaster in the Greco-Roman World”**

Dane Scott, *Boston University*

**Panel: Religion and Race in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America**  
**SSB 201/203**

Respondent: Dr. John Corrigan, *Florida State University*

Moderator: Humberto Perez, *Florida State University*

**“Rev. Henry Mitchell, Broken Promises, and Religio-Political Organizing”**

Sam McLoughlin, *Stanford University*

**“An Examination of Overlooked Church Records of Three Virginian  
Redemptorist Black Catholic Churches”**

Philip Chivily, *Florida State University*

**“From Preaching to Afro-pessimism: The Black Secularism of James Baldwin”**

Chloe Griffin, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

**Lunch**  
**2:15–3:00pm**  
**SSB 219**

## **“Teaching in Contentious Classrooms” A Roundtable Discussion**

**3:00–5:15pm  
SSB 201/203**

Moderator: Dr. Aline Kalbian, *Florida State University*

Panelists:

Dr. David Frankfurter, *Boston University*

David Frankfurter holds the William Goodwin Aurelio Chair of the Appreciation of Scripture at Boston University. His academic interests involve theoretical issues like the place of magic in religion, the relationship of religion and violence, the nature of Christianization, and the representation of evil in culture. He teaches courses on Western religions, comparative religions, Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, and the documents of early Christianity, including extra-canonical sources, magical texts, and saints' lives.

Dr. Michael Muhammad Knight, *University of Central Florida*

Dr. Knight is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at UCF. His 2004 novel *The Taqwacores*, centering on a group of punk-rock Muslims, launched a cultural movement among young Muslims and led to the development of an actual Taqwacore genre of Islamic punk music. He published several other novels, books, and journalistic articles about American Islam before expanding his repertoire to include academic work as well. At UCF, he teaches courses such as World Religions; Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad; and Religion and Medicine.

Dr. Tracie Mahaffey, *Florida State University*

Dr. Mahaffey is a Senior Associate Teaching Faculty and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Philosophy at FSU. She is interested in the philosophy of action, specifically issues of autonomy and informed consent, teaching courses such as bioethics and the ethics of consent.



## Notes:

---

## Notes:

---

## Notes:

---

**Thank you to all of the hard-working FSU  
Religion Graduate Student Volunteers who  
made this possible.**

**A Special Thank You:**

Laurel McKinley

Katie Redd

Comeback Tacos

HERo

Matthew Spinks and On the Rocks Bartending

FSU Congress of Graduate Students

FSU Department of Religion

FSU Student Government Association

**Co-Directors:**

**Emily Olsen, Scott Bursey, and Ashley Douglas**

**Committee Members**

Summer Boucher (Communications Chair)

Casey Aldridge (Treasurer)

Tommy Woodward, Kaitlynn Balmer, and Rebekah Gordon (Facilities)

Scott Bursey and Rebekah Gordon (Hospitality)

Scott Bursey, Ashley Douglas, and Philip Chivily (Publicity)

Dr. Andrew Durdin (Advisor)

Jon Bridges and Susan Stetson (Administrator)