



Florida State University

## DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

Fall 2018



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### PROFESSOR AMANDA PORTERFIELD RETIRES

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 the Department of Religion at Florida State will honor the scholarly career of Dr. Amanda Porterfield. The day's program will include a number of her students as well as Dr. Ron Numbers (The Hilldale Professor of the History of Science and Medicine Emeritus, University of Wisconsin—Madison) and Dr. Marie Griffith (John C. Danforth Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, Washington University in St. Louis). A reception will follow. Andrew Gardner, Ph.D. candidate in the department, offers the following reflections on Professor Porterfield's career:

In a graduate seminar on American Religious Historiography, Amanda Porterfield once explained that her doctoral advisor, William Clebsch, used to say that scholars fall into two categories—foxes and hedgehogs. She paused for a moment, smiled and said, "I'm a fox!" Before arriving at Florida State University in 2003, Porterfield held positions at Syracuse University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and the University of Wyoming. Throughout her scholastic career, Porterfield has sought to confront and challenge dominant trends within the field of American religious history in order to yield a fuller picture of the American past.

Her early scholarship etched out the traditions of American feminine spirituality as well as pushed back against dominant narratives in American Puritan studies that neglected the role of gender within the

life of seventeenth century New England. In 2002, she worked collaboratively with Conrad Cherry and Betty A. DeBerg on an ethnographic study entitled *Religion on Campus*, which challenged assumptions of secularization in higher education by paying closer attention to student life. Ten years later, her monograph *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation* likewise sought to disrupt and critique popular narratives that claimed religion functioned as a democratizing force in the early American republic. She countered such arguments with a nuanced perspective that characterized the period as one of intense skepticism and uncertainty. Porterfield's most recent work, *Corporate Spirit: and the Rise of the Modern Corporation* provides a sweeping narrative of the role Pauline theological constructions of the body of Christ played in producing America's corporate business culture. Currently, she is working on a project that analyzes the historic relationship between the arts and religious practice.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**11/09/18:** An Event in Honor of Amanda Porterfield; Beth Moor Lounge; 1:00pm to 5:30pm. Reception to follow.

**12/14/18:** The Sheng Yen Lecture

**02/22-23, 2019:** The Graduate Student Symposium

**03/28/19:** The Priest Lecture with Susan Harvey, Brown University

**Spr 2019:** Bartholomeusz Lecture

More details will appear at: <http://religion.fsu.edu>

## UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

## “HARRY POTTER” IN LONDON



Dr. Cronin (far right) and her students pose in front of Stonehenge.

One of our most popular undergraduate courses, Religion and 20th-Century Fantasy Literature (affectionately known as the “Harry Potter” course) was offered for the first time as part of the FSU Study Abroad program during July, 2018. Under the experienced leadership of Dr. Sonya Cronin, nine students enrolled in this 4-week, self-contained program at the FSU London Center, which included trips to Oxford, Edinburgh, Stonehenge, Avebury, and the Harry Potter Studios in Waterford, as well as sites around London. The program offered students British cultural immersion that greatly enhanced the course materials concentrating on religious themes in the writings of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and J. K. Rowling. One student stated, “Learning about some of my favorite authors and stories while in the UK was an unforgettable experience. Although it was short, this was the best class I have taken so far at FSU.” Another wrote, “I could discuss these stories for hours on end, and I’m so glad I got to do that in the setting where England became our classroom.” We are hoping to see more of our religion courses in the study abroad centers in the future. Plans are underway to offer this course in London again in 2019.

## 5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

The Department’s 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium was held on April 28<sup>th</sup> on the theme of “Religion – Between Peace and Violence”. Dr. Rebecca Falcasantos, a postdoctoral fellow in our department, gave the keynote talk on “Violence, Religion, and Writing History”. Five undergraduates shared their research papers on topics ranging from the Gospel of John to Islamic governance in Malaysia. The symposium concluded with a lively roundtable of graduate students discussing their experiences in graduate schools and answering questions from the audience.



Lucas Brandon, academic achievement award winner, presenting at the Undergrad Research Symposium.

## UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

The 2018 Betty Phifer award for undergrad excellence in academics and public service went to **Cristian Mercado**, who, in addition to his work as a risk management associate at the PACE center for girls, was volunteer assistant stage manager at the Rikki Rikki Tavi theatre, the volunteer stage manager for student theatre productions for the Student Theatre Association, as well as a volunteer actor in several productions both on and off campus. Cristian also wrote a play about Puerto Rican nationalism and identity questions via the work of his grandfather, Manuel Cancel Miranda.

This 2018 academic achievement award went to **Lucas Brandon**, who maintained a 3.9 GPA. He is currently living in Panama City Beach and working as a barista while pursuing two of his passions, acting and writing, as he earns and saves money to return to school for a master’s degree in religions of Western antiquity.

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## GRADUATE NEWS

### ACADEMIC PILGRIMS: OUR GRADUATE STUDENTS STUDY ABROAD



Carson Bay



Rebecca Peters

The study of religion is opening our graduate students to the world and the world to them! As our doctoral students increasingly pursue international research, they must secure grants to pay for their travel and living expenses overseas. And they are meeting the challenge! Of late they have had remarkable success in securing international fellowships for their dissertation research.

In 2016-17, three of our students won international fellowships. **Carson Bay** spent the year as a Fulbright Fellow at the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Muenster, Germany. There he explored themes of identity in the literary corpus of Flavius Josephus. He also presented at numerous international conferences and attended a six-week German language course in Marburg.

In India, **Rebecca Peters** studied Hindi thanks to an American Institute of Indian Studies Language Fellowship. While in Mumbai, she also met film director Leena Yadav, with whom she hopes to study links between the lives of women filmmakers in Bollywood and their films. Fittingly, her language studies included making a short film in Hindi!

**David Skelton** received a Fulbright Fellowship to study at the University of Göttingen in Germany. There he examined the pedagogical role of hymns in the apocryphal book of Ben Sira and the Dead Sea Scrolls. He drew on other ancient texts as well and presented at conferences at the Universities of Cambridge, Göttingen, and Halle.

Last year, **Jacob Lollar** won a Chateaubriand Fellowship to spend fall 2017 in Paris with the Centre national de la recherche scientifique working on the manuscripts of Syriac apocrypha narratives at France's Bibliothèque nationale. He presented his work at the Société pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne in November 2017 and has published on it in *Apocrypha*.

This academic year, **Joshua Matson** is a research associate with the Scripta Qumranica Electronica project at the University of Haifa in Israel thanks to an FSU International Dissertation Research Fellowship and a Brigham Young University Religious Education Dissertation Research Fellowship. His dissertation focuses on the reception history of the Hebrew Minor Prophets in the Second Temple period.

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### RELIGION GRAD HIRED BY FSU TO ENHANCE HONORS PROGRAM

Ross Moret, who earned his Ph.D. from our department this past May, has been hired as one of three new teaching faculty members in the FSU Honors Program. Working with his colleagues, Moret has designed a core honors curriculum around interrelated courses on enduring themes. Their theme for 2018-2019 is freedom and (in)equality.

This year, Moret, who also holds a courtesy appointment in Religion, is teaching a course on religion and freedom from secular and religious perspectives and one on race, religion, and politics in America.



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## FEATURED GRADUATE ALUMNI

The Religion Department boasts an excellent job placement record for Ph.D. students. In this feature, we highlight two Ph.D. students who have followed an unusual career path and who are contributing in important ways to higher education in the US.



**Dr. Jessica Tinklenberg** (Ph.D. 2006) is the Program Director for the Claremont Colleges Center for Teaching and Learning, a seven-institution consortium of colleges and universities in Southern California. Jessica works with faculty and instructional staff to encourage reflective teaching and improve learning opportunities and outcomes for a diverse student population at all levels of academic work.

Jessica was a tenured faculty member at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa before leaving to take the position at Claremont Colleges. When asked to reflect on how her time at FSU influenced her career trajectory, Jessica responded “Over ten years as an undergraduate instructor after obtaining my PhD, I thought often of Drs. Kalbian, Levenson, Kelsay, Erndl, and Burkes in particular. I reflected on their teaching techniques and questions, their enthusiasm and critiques, and – especially – the ways in which they showed their deep commitment to student success.”



This past May, **Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Barre** (Ph.D., 2009) was appointed Executive Director of the Teaching and Learning Collaborative at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She leads a team of academics who work with faculty, staff, and graduate students to help them succeed in meeting the primary mission of the university – academic learning. Her team also works closely with administrators on institutional policies that have important implications for teaching and learning on campus.

As with Jessica, Betsy’s path to this field was not direct. After completing her degree, she spent a year in a teaching-focused postdoctoral fellowship at Lake Forest College. She then held a tenure-track position at Marymount Manhattan College for a brief period before landing at Rice University where after teaching for two years, she was appointed a founding Assistant Director of the new Teaching Center at Rice.

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## NEW POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATE FALL 2018



**Heather M. DuBois** (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame) specializes in critical approaches to religion, violence, and peacebuilding and political theology. Her current research articulates intrapersonal transformation in terms of power, desire, virtue, and praxis, drawing upon the critical theory of Judith Butler, the mystical anthropology of John of the Cross, and the affect theory of Silvan Tomkins. She is completing a manuscript that conceptualizes movement through identity-based impasse. Her next project will be a comparative exploration of religious and secular spiritualities committed to pluralism and solidarity. Heather’s pedagogy employs multi-disciplinary resources to investigate contemporary issues. She has taught courses on suffering and evil that incorporate philosophy, theology, psychology, peace studies, ethics, political science, and the arts. At FSU, she is teaching “Religion and Conflict” and “Gender and Religion.”

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## NEWS FROM OUR FORMER AND PRESENT POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATES

**Rebecca Stephens Falcasantos** (PhD, Brown) is in the second year of her postdoc at FSU. She finished a manuscript, *Constantinople: Ritual, Violence, and Memory in the Making of a Christian Imperial Capital*, which is under contract with the University of California Press. Falcasantos has two essays in press, one on mimesis (imitation) in John Chrysostom's writings and the other on Jerusalem in Christian pilgrimage and religious symbolism. She also won an award in May from the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* for "Best First Article."

**Allyson Gonzalez** (PhD, Brandeis University) is currently the Blaustein Fellow for Modern Jewish Studies at Yale University. She is completing her book *The Sephardi Culture Makers: Modern Jewish Politics at the End of Exile* (working title). Her article "Abraham S. Yahuda (1877-1951) and the Politics of Modern Jewish Scholarship" is forthcoming in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* (summer 2019). In 2017-2018 she received the New Voices in Jewish Studies Award, a joint award from Columbia University and Fordham University.

**Douglas M. Gildow** (PhD, Princeton University) is Assistant Professor at Chinese University of Hong Kong in the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies. He is currently working on an article on current trends in Chinese Buddhist monasticism, as well as a book manuscript titled *Monastic Buddhist Education*, which examines a historically new institution, the Buddhist seminary, and analyzes its impact on Buddhism and academia.

**David C. Kirkpatrick** (PhD, University of Edinburgh) is Assistant Professor of religion at James Madison University in Virginia. His book, *A Gospel for the Poor: Global Social Christianity and the Latin American Evangelical Left* (University of Pennsylvania, 2019) will appear in the spring. He has also begun his next project on violence and the making of American evangelicalism.

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## NEW FACULTY

**Andrew Durdin** (PhD, University of Chicago) joined the department in Fall 2018. He teaches World Religions and courses in ancient Mediterranean religions. His research advances the critical study of religion by examining cultural practices often gathered together (by scholars and non-scholars alike) as evidence for "ancient religion." He focuses specifically on the historical era of the high Roman Empire. His manuscript, tentatively titled *Redescribing "Magic": Discourse, Alterity, and Religion in the Roman World*, pursues scholarly critiques of the modern category of "magic" and its problematic application to ancient materials with the goal of developing a more nuanced view of how ancient Romans theorized cultural alterity and the social and material circumstances that invited them to do so.



**Elizabeth A. Cecil** (PhD, Brown University) joined our department as an assistant professor in 2018. Her dissertation explored the intersections of religion, politics, and place-making in early medieval India with a particular focus on the geographic expansion of a religious community called the Pāsupatas, devotees of the Hindu God Śiva. This work was inspired by her time as a member of the International Skandapurā Project in the Netherlands, a research consortium focused on the historical development of a body of Sanskrit narrative literature concerned with communicating religious identities and mapping sacred geography. Dr. Cecil's forthcoming book—*Mapping the Pāsupata Landscape: Narrative, Place, and the Śaiva Imaginary in Early North India* (Brill, 2019) is the result of this research. With Cecil's new projects, she investigates the dynamics of trans-regional religious networks in early South and Southeast Asia and explores the use of material media—ranging from monumental temples and inscribed columns to votive sculptures and pocket-sized shrines—to communicate political aspirations and innovative religious ideologies and ritual practices.

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## FACULTY UPDATES

**Kristina Buhrman** began preliminary research in Japan, funded by the Association for Asian Studies North East Asia Council and an FSU Planning grant, on memory and disasters in Japan from 800 to 1900. She continues her work on calendars and astrology, and in August presented (in Japanese) at an international symposium at Yamaguchi University. In September, she gave an invited talk at the University of Arkansas East Asian Studies Program entitled “Divination, Exorcism, and Reputation in Old Japanese Tales.”

**John Corrigan** published *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Religion* (September, 2018), a multivolume project for which he served as editor-in-chief. He has just finished a monograph on religious intolerance and American foreign policy for the University of Chicago Press. He gave a series of talks on the topic of “Protestantism, Capitalism, and Empire” at the Obama Center in Germany in October 2018.

**Bryan Cuevas** completed an article entitled “The Politics of Magical Warfare” to be published in the volume *Faith and Empire: Art and Politics in Tibetan Buddhism* (Serindia Publications) for the upcoming exhibition at the Rubin Museum in New York City, opening February 2019. In May 2017, he was an invited participant in the Tibetan literature workshop on “Kāvya and Poetics” at the Latse Library in New York.

**Matthew Day** published “The Short Happy Life of the ‘Affluent’ Working Class: Consumption and Debt in the Age of Credit” in *Capital & Class*.

**Jamil Drake** was selected to the 2018-2019 Young Scholars in American Religion program. This program is designed to support emerging scholars in the field of American Religion by providing them with resources to improve their teaching, research, and professional skills, supported by the Lilly Endowment.

**Francois Dupuigrenet** edited Simone Weil’s commentary on the Lord’s Prayer in 2017. He also completed work on an anthology of Simone Weil’s texts about Christ that will be published in France this fall.

**Adam Gaiser** co-authored with his graduate student, James Riggan, a two-part article (“Stamps of the Fallen”) on the images of martyrs and martyrdom on post-revolutionary Iranian postage stamps. He continues to work on his introduction to Muslim sectarianism, which is provisionally entitled *The Umma Divided: An Introduction to Muslim Sects and Schools*.

**Matthew Goff** co-organized a conference in Berlin, Germany this summer and also attended a conference in Helsinki, Finland. This semester he is teaching a popular course on demons that has 140 students and trying to finish too many academic projects.

**Joseph Hellweg** has manuscripts in press in *Afrique contemporaine*, the *African Studies Review*, and two edited collections by Wiley-Blackwell. In September he will present at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden and, in November in the US, at the American Academy of Religion and African Studies Association meetings and participate in an invited workshop that same month for the “Empires of the Sahel” exhibit of West African art at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, MA. He is now working on a book manuscript tentatively titled, “Modern Mandé: Everyday Approaches to Theology and Governance in Muslim West Africa.”

**Aline Kalbian** presented a poster at the Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church Conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia this summer. She co-edits the *Journal of Religious Ethics* and serve as the Chair of the department. She continues work on a book on the ethics of hospitality.

**Martin Kavka** published four articles in 2018, including “Is Critique Jewish?” in *Jewish Quarterly Review* and “Levinas’s Accounts of Messianism” in *The Oxford Handbook to Emmanuel Levinas*. He also continues his editorial work on the *Journal of Religious Ethics* and the proceedings of his recent fellowship year at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. The highlight of his 2018, however, was hooding his student Joshua Lupo as he received his Ph.D. in May.

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## FACULTY UPDATES (continued)

**Nicole Kelley** is completing an article titled “Punitive Miracles and Coercive Rhetoric in Late Antique Christianity.” Her proposal was selected for FSU’s Center for the Advancement of Teaching Summer 2018 Course Design Seminar.

**John Kelsay** continues to write and to teach about the relationship between religion, politics, and war. Recent publications include “‘Let God Rise Up!’: The Bible and Notions of Victory in War,” in Andrew Nom, et al, eds. *Moral Victories: The Ethics of Winning Wars* (Oxford, 2017), “Alberico Gentili (1552-1608),” in Daniel Brunstetter and Cian O’Driscoll, eds., *Just War Thinkers: From Cicero to the Twenty-first Century* (Routledge, 2018), and “The Signs of the Times: Classical Just War Thinking and the Struggle against Jihadists,” in Daniel Brunstetter and Jean-Vincent Holeindre, eds., *The Ethics of War and Peace Revisited* (Georgetown, 2018).

**David Levenson** published an expanded version of his essay on 'Messianic' Movements," in the *Jewish Annotated New Testament*, edited by A.J. Levine and Marc Brettler (Oxford, 2017). Together with Thomas Martin of Holy Cross he continues work on two long-term projects: a translation and commentary for the Greek text of Josephus’ *Jewish War*, which will appear in the Brill Josephus Project series, and the first critical texts for portions of the Latin translations of Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* and *Jewish War*.

**Michael McVicar** published two book chapters in 2017: “Christian Reconstructionism and the Austrian School of Economics,” in *Hayek: A Collaborative Biography, Part IX: The Divine Right of the ‘Free’ Market*, ed. Robert Leeson, and “Apostles of Deceit: Ecumenism, Fundamentalism, Surveillance, and the Contested Loyalties of Protestant Clergy During the Cold War,” in *The FBI and Religion: Faith and National Security before and after 9/11*, ed. Sylvester A. Johnson and Steven Weitzman.

**Sumner B. Twiss** had a paper edition of his 2015 co-edited book on *Chinese Just War Ethics* released this past year. He delivered keynote addresses at the University of Chicago and the Society of Christian Ethics, and is currently working on papers regarding global ethics and religious liberty, as well as a book on *Human Rights and Religion in Comparative Perspective*.

**Jimmy Yu** has recently edited a special issue of the *Journal of Religion and Violence* on Asian religions and its manifestation of violence. He is also working on publishing his next book, *Creating a Chan Orthodoxy: A Study of Sheng Yen and the Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan*. He continues to serve as the co-editor for the *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* and Columbia University Press’ Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### SHANNON (BURKES) PINETTE

Shannon Burkes Pinette (AM '91, PhD '97), age 49, passed on Sunday, May 16, 2018 in San Antonio, Texas after a long illness. She was a faculty member of the department, in the Religions of Western Antiquity track, from 1997-2004. She was born on August 24, 1968 in Augusta, Georgia. She received her bachelor’s degree from Grinnell University in Iowa in 1990. She did her graduate studies at the University of Chicago. A brilliant scholar, she published *Death in Qoheleth and Egyptian Biographies of the Late Period* (1999) and *God, Self, and Death: The Shape of Religious Transformation in the Second Temple Period* (2003). Shannon was also a much loved teacher, receiving an undergraduate teaching award at FSU in 2002. Shannon left academia after meeting her future husband, Kevin Pinette; they settled in San Antonio in 2008. Shannon is survived by her husband, her mother Ritchie Burkes, and her father Glenn Burkes.



**Faculty, students, and their families enjoyed the**

**END OF YEAR PICNIC AT THE RESERVATION**

**MAY 5TH, 2018**



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