



THE HERALD

Department of Religion

Newsletter - Fall 2007

Franklin College

University of Georgia



*** NEW FACULTY JOIN THE RELIGION DEPARTMENT ***

Highlights in Newsletter:

- Dr. Honerkamp meets King of Morocco – p. 2
- Dr. Medine wins grant & other faculty news – pp. 2-3
- INAS Conference – p. 3
- Studies Abroad – p. 3
- Alumni & student news – p. 4
- Student travels to Iran – p. 7
- Dr. Jan Willis to visit campus – back cover

New Faculty

The department of Religion is delighted to announce the arrival of **Dr. Wayne Coppins** to the University of Georgia's Religion Department. His speciality is New Testament Studies. Dr. Coppins received his undergraduate degree from UGA in Greek and Latin 1998. From 1999-2001 he was a student of Protestant Theology at the University of Tübingen, Germany. Dr. Coppins received his Masters in Theological Research in 2002 from the University of Durham, England, and completed his PhD in New Testament from Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, England, in 2007. While at Cambridge Dr. Coppins taught New Testament Greek at the Faculty of Divinity. In addition to New Testament Greek, Dr. Coppins works in German, Ancient Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. We are excited to have Dr. Coppins in the department and look forward to his contribution to our academic program.

Dr. Haider Bhuiyan joins UGA Department of Religion Fall 2007 as a Lecturer in Arabic Studies. Mr. Bhuiyan holds two BA degrees, one in Islamic Studies from Dhaka Alia Madrasa in Bangladesh; two MA degrees, one in Islamic Studies from Dhaka Alias Madrash in Bangladesh and the other in History from the University of Manitoba, Canada; and is currently completing his PhD degree in Arabic at the Middle East Center at the University of Utah. With the growth of our Arabic Language program, Mr. Bhuiyan's addition will be integral to our developing an Arabic major.

In addition, the Department of Religion has been given approval to open two new searches for faculty. One will be a Lecturer in South Asian Religions and the other will be a joint appointment with African Studies for an Assistant Professor in African Traditional (Indigenous) Religions. The positions will begin Fall 2008. For more information see the Departmental website, www.uga.edu/religion.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING ASSISTANTS VISIT



Pictured L-R: Ben Rhit, Tarhan, Nur'aeni, Cheraghi

The Religion Department welcomed four Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants from the countries of Iran, Indonesia, Turkey and Tunisia. The FLTA program is federally funded by the U.S. State Department. With a budget of \$57 million allocated by the department of education through the National Security Language Initiative, the program brought more than 2000 TAs to the United States last year. For students at the University of Georgia, sections of Arabic, Persian, Indonesian, and Turkish will be available this year.

Abdelkader Ben Rhit (Tunisia), Akbar Cheraghi (Iran), Zaki Nur'aeni (Indonesia) and Betül Tarhan (Turkey) joined the staff this fall to teach their native languages for a year, fulfilling the first requirement of program. They will return to their home countries afterwards. It will then be up to them and the university students they taught, as Abdelkader Ben Rhit said, "to go back home and share their experiences." He said, "I am here not only as an instructor of Arabic, but also a cultural ambassador. My role is to teach Arabic, my mother tongue, through the context of culture and show culture through the means of language."

Dr. Alan Godlas, Professor of Islam, who pursued the application process to bring the FLTAs to the university, said the TAs would benefit students. They would "gain additional insight from learning the language from a native speaker," This exchange, Godlas said, is critical in today's era of "gunpoint democracy." The Religion Department plans to apply for new FLTAs for next year and continue the program.

FACULTY NEWS

In addition to classroom teaching, advisement, and campus service, the Religion Faculty continue to share their expertise locally, nationally, and internationally through publications, lectures and consultations.

In March 2007 **Dr. Richard Elliott Friedman**, the Ann and Jay Davis Professor of Jewish Studies, gave an inaugural address, "Israel and the Bible, Then and Now: The Relevance of the Bible to the Current Middle East." The address was well attended by University faculty, students, and staff as well as guests from the Athens and Atlanta Communities.

Dr. Friedman also presented a lecture: "Before the Apple" at the Stephen S. Wise Free Synagogue in New York, November 2007. He published two articles: "Biblical Perspective in *Dream of Zion*", in *Jewish Lights*, 2007, Jeffrey Salkin, ed. and "Penta-teuch," with Shawna Dolansky, in *Encyclopedia Judaica* 2007. He also served on the University Humanities Review Committee.

In October, **Dr. Russell Kirkland** presented an invited lecture at the Citadel (Charleston, South Carolina) entitled "What is 'A Taoist'?" Dr. Kirkland also provided a guest lecture to Citadel cadets in a course on the History of East Asian Religions, on invitation of Professor Keith Knapp, Westvaco Professor of National Security Studies in the Citadel's Department of History. In addition, Dr. Kirkland presented a paper entitled "Russian Perspectives on Early Taoism" at the annual Southeast Early China Roundtable, in St. Petersburg, Florida. (Dr. Kirkland hosted the Roundtable at UGA in 2000.) He also continues editing a new book on Taoism by the late Russian scholar Evgeny Torchinov.

Rabta, Morocco: September 2007

Dr. Kenneth Honerkamp had the honor of being invited to the lessons held yearly in the month of Ramadan in Rabat, Morocco. This event is sponsored by the king of Morocco, His Majesty Muhammad VI. During the event Professor Honerkamp greeted the King and presented him with Dr. Honerkamp's own published works. This event brings scholars of Islamic Studies from many countries of the Muslim world. Dr. Honerkamp met with and engaged in discussion with scholars from Mauritania, Tunis, Iraq, Egypt and Syria, to mention a few countries. The meeting with His Majesty Muhammad VI also permitted Dr. Honerkamp to present the king with the plans for a renovation of the shrine of Ibn Abbad of Ronda, a project that Dr. Honerkamp has been involved with for some years.



Nouakchott, Mauritania, Sept-Oct 2007

Dr. Honerkamp, at the invitation of the US State Department, took part in the U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program to Mauritania. He spent a week in the capitol Nouakchott where he spoke at universities and institutes of higher education in Islamic Studies. He was interviewed on television, radio and newspaper. He addressed an assembly of dignitaries at a fast breaking ceremony at the American Embassy. Dr. Honerkamp was well received by all and brought back a message of good will and greetings of peace from the people of Mauritania.

Bedjaia, Algeria, December 2006

In December 2006 **Dr. Honerkamp** was invited to the international conference in Bedjaia, Algeria, dedicated to the themes of Sufism, Culture, and Music, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of Algeria. Dr. Honerkamp presided over several panels and presented a paper, "La Pedagogie Soufie d'Ibn Abbad de Ronda(1332-1290)," in which he examined the traditional methodology of the teaching of Ibn Abbad based on a collection of his letters of spiritual guidance, which have been edited by Dr. Honerkamp. The conference was of particular interest in that it was open to the general public and became a forum for the exchange of ideas on many levels. Dr. Honerkamp was very well received by all present, who were amazed that there were Americans teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies in institutions of higher education in the United States.

Dr. Honerkamp has continued with his research into the lives and teachings of Ibn Abbad of Ronda (1332-1390), Adu Yallanur (d.1177), and Hassan al-Yusi (1631-1691), the scholastic and spiritual mentors of Morocco and North Africa, publishing three articles published this year. He continues with his soon to be published translation of the Major Collection of the Letters of Spiritual Guidance of Ibn Abbad.

Dr. Sandy Dwayne Martin, Professor and Department Head, accepted an invitation to deliver the inaugural Robert and Blanch Bowers Lecture for the Department of Religion at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, in October 2007. The title of his paper was "Lessons Drawn from African American Religious History: The Significance of Developments in Black Baptist History, 1850-1880." Dr. Martin also participated in the annual Baptist Classics Seminar held at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, in September 2007. This year focused on Baptist primary documents from the 1900-1950 period.

Dr. Alan Godlas delivered a number of lectures this year: he traveled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in August 2007 to deliver a paper. He also presented a paper, "Rumi and Spiritual Transformation," at the Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi Conference at George Washington University, Washington, D.C., March 17, 2007. On March 24, 2007 he presented two papers, "Understanding an Interfaith Pilgrimage to Turkey: Interfaith Dialogue in Islam and the Vision of Fethullah Gulen," and "Muslims and Others in Sacred Space Cingence," at the College of Charleston, Charleston SC. In May 2007 Dr. Godlas traveled to Istanbul, Turkey to present a paper entitled, "Toward a Coherent and Systematic Understanding of Rumi," at the International Symposium on Rumi.

Dr. Carolyn Medine received, along with Melanie Harris (Union Theological Seminary) and Helen Rhee (Westmont College), a grant award by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Religion, funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. The grant, "Teaching into the Difficult" is part of the Wabash Center's "Difficult Questions in the Classroom" grant program. Dr. Medine and her colleagues will explore what happens when a woman of color enters the religious studies classroom. Dr. Medine is also in the second year of a \$15,000 Wabash Center grant on Teaching Christian subjects in a large public university. The co-grantors are Sandie Gravett (Appalachian State) and Mark Hulsether (Univ. of TN-Knoxville).

Dr. Medine will be speaking on January 11, 2008 at Ohio Northern University. She will deliver a lecture at their 40th anniversary Commemoration of the Celebration of the Civil Rights Movement of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. William Power published an article, "Existential-Hayatological Theism" in the *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* (June 2007).



Native American Institute News

The Institute of Native American Studies at the University of Georgia will host the second interdisciplinary meeting in Native American and Indigenous Studies April 10-12, 2008, to share research and continue the discussion of development of an academic association for our field. We invite submissions of individual papers or panels of papers on any topic in Native American and Indigenous studies. All persons working in the field are invited and encouraged to submit proposals. For more information see their website www.uga.edu/inas

Dr. Jace Weaver, Professor of Religion and Director of the Institute of Native American Studies, was appointed to the UGA Diversity Advisory Council. The Council will advise the University via the Office of Institutional Diversity in the design and implementation of strategies to advance and enhance diversity on Campus.



Studies Abroad - Morocco

The Maymester in Morocco spent four weeks from May 10 to June 8, 2007 in the North African country of Morocco. Sixteen students accompanied by Dr. Kenneth Honerkamp and Dr. Alan Godlas toured the country and studied Moroccan culture and Arabic. The program helped some students earn graduation requirements. The trip was centered in the city of Marrakesh, "The Capitol of the South," where the course material was taught on a daily basis at the American Language Center of Marrakesh. The program included trips to rural areas such as the Urieka Valley of the High Atlas Mountains, the oasis of Wad Draa and Zagora, and the Sahara Desert, where the students spent a night under the stars in Bedouin tents. The royal cities of Rabat and Fes were the focus of other excursions. The program was physically and intellectually challenging. Learning took place inside the classroom and on the road as well. Upon arrival in Athens Prof. Honerkamp, who became known as "Dr. H" on the trip, said, "I am truly proud of all the students who participated in the program. I am sure that all of them, on the level of grass roots diplomacy, have left behind in Moroccan hearts and minds many good memories of the best traits that Americans abroad can exemplify."

The Department of Religion is planning another Maymester in Morocco May 2008, check the Islamic Studies website for more information, photos, and student journal entries. <http://www.uga.edu/islam/>

Alumni and Student News

Our alumni and students continue to make our Department, College, and University proud. Among the many achievements are those below.

Dr. Christopher Colt Anderson (MA, 91) has had his most recent book published, *The Great Reformers From Gregory the Great to Dorothy Day*, by Paulist Press 2007. He also has another book now available in paperback: *A Call to Piety: St. Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days (studies in Franciscanism)*, Franciscan Press. Dr. Anderson received his PhD from Marquette University and is now teaching at the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary, Graduate School of Theology. He specializes in Church History from the 8th to the 16th century.

Religion Major, **Alicia Bellezza** (BA, 08) received an Undergraduate Achievement Award for 2007 from the Alpha Gamma Tau chapter of the Theta Alpha Kappa National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology.

Chen-Yin (Annie) Chen (MA, 07) was accepted into the PhD program at St. Louis University. She is studying Historical Theology.

Cynthia Gayle Clayton (MA, 97) has been hired as an adjunct instructor at a small North Carolina school, Isothermal Community College (www.isothermal.edu). She will be teaching World Religions.

Jeremy Collins (MA, 02) visited Athens in October at the invitation of the Athens-Clarke County Library which celebrated the release of the Fall 2007 issue of the *Georgia Review*. Mr. Collins read from his essay "Shadow Boxing" which appeared in the issue. Jeremy received an MFA in creative writing from the University of New Mexico and is currently teaching at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Senior Foundation Fellow **Brad Lindell** (BA, 07) has yet to begin medical school, but he is already making a contribution to the field. His volunteer work as a medical translation volunteer and as an ESL teacher through Catholic Social Services spurred him to develop a guide for medical professionals as they communicate with people whose native language is Spanish. Nearly 300 copies have been sold to hospitals and medical professionals to date. Brad graduated in May 2007 with a B.A. in Religion, and a B. S. in Microbiology. His favorite professor was William Power of the department of Religion. Brad said, "Perhaps it's our Mississippi connection, or his love of bass fishing or his stories of free love and nickel beer at the 40 Watt. Without a doubt, Dr. Power is a great professor and friend, and I regret that I have only one more semester to enjoy his classes."

David McDuffie (MA, 07) is working on a second MA degree with the Philosophy Department at UGA. Mr. McDuffie also completed a Certificate in Environmental Ethics in 2007.

It is never too late: Monzer Mansour (MA, 07) recently completed his MA degree at UGA after 12 years, having left the University in 1990. He went on and obtained a JD degree from Georgia State University and has been working as a lawyer in Arkansas. This past Fall he was readmitted to UGA and successfully completed his MA degree Spring 2007. His thesis topic was "Is John Hicks' Theory of Religious Pluralism Philosophically Tenable?" His major professor was Dr. William Power. We congratulate Mr. Mansour!

Jordan Rothacker (MA, 05) looks forward to a late Spring 08 release of his book *Voices in Script: Conversations with Freehand Literary Artists*. From his column "Freehanding with. . ." in *Stylus Magazine*, is a collected work of interviews with such writer as Gore Vidal, Joyce Carol Oates, Tom Robbins, and Chuck Palahniuk.

Meagan Summers (MA, 07) is an Upper Division Religion Teacher at Berkeley Preparatory School in Tampa, Florida. She teaches Comparative Religions, Western Traditions to freshman and Eastern traditions to sophomores. The school is a private K-12 Episcopal school. In addition to teaching she is the faculty sponsor for the school newspaper and faculty sponsor for the Creative Kids Club.

Adam Ware (MA, 07) recently had his thesis posted to the Smashing Pumpkin's News webpage (Aug. 30, 2007). Mr. Ware's thesis discusses the mystery and complex connections included in the Smashing Pumpkin's albums *Machina/Machina II* backstory.

Svend White (MA, 08), contributed a chapter entitled "The Otherization of Europe's Muslims" to a collection of essays published in Germany on the implications of the Danish cartoon controversy for the media, *The Cartoon Debate and the Freedom of the Press, Conflicting Norms and Values in the Global Media Culture*, Bernahard Debatin ed. <http://litverlag.de/isbn/3-8258-9950-9>.

Svend also contributed 5 entries to the recently published *Encyclopedia of Islam in the United States*, Jocelyn Cesari ed. His topics were "Jihad," "Democracy," "Salafiyya Movement," and "Headscraf," co-written with his wife, Shabana Mir. http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/product-description/0313336253/ref=dp_proddesc_0/0002-1365685-2832814?ie=UTF8&n+238155&s=books.

Kelly Williams (MA, 08), received a \$1000 grant from the UGA Wilson Center for Humanities and Arts to travel to New York. Ms. Williams visited the Oneida Community, a nineteenth-century religious commune in central New York, to conduct research for her thesis. She also visited the Syracuse University Library which houses the largest public collection of Oneida Community documents and archives.

Friends of the Department of Religion

The Department of Religion would appreciate very much your support of its teaching and research endeavors. Donations to the Department of Religion Fund help with graduate student fellowships, student travel, guest speakers and other expenses.

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_____ I am sorry that I am unable to lend financial support at the present time, but please feel free to keep me informed about the department's activities and to contact me in the future for possible support.

AFASREL08

What have you been up to?

The Department of Religion would like to hear from its former members -- undergraduates, graduates, and faculty.

Please contact us with items for our future newsletters.

You can send items by email: religion@uga.edu.

Or if you wish you may mail them to
Zinetta McDonald, Religion Dept, Peabody Hall,
UGA, Athens, GA 30602.

We also will accept a fax: 706-542-6724.

Publication of the newsletter is usually in the late Fall.

Religion Graduation and Enrollment

The Department of Religion recorded the highest number of graduates from the MA program in one semester this past Spring 2007. Ten students graduated with their MA degree: **Chih-Yin Chen, Ivey Campbell, Adam Ware, Matthew Long, Wesley Schwein, Meagan Summers, Jenny Schwartzberg.** Not pictured: **Monzer Mansour, Seong-Uk Kim, and Bryan Gallant.** We expect to set another record this coming Spring with 14 possible graduates.



Our Undergraduate Program continues to grow as well. We currently have 108 Religion Majors, 69 Religion Minors and 5 Arabic Minors.

Christina Torns (MA, 08) had an opportunity to travel to Iran with the new College of California “On the Silk Road to Iran” summer program in August 2007. The purpose of the trip was to follow in the footsteps of those who throughout the centuries have traveled to Iran in order to broaden their world perspectives. The itinerary included the classical centers of Persian culture such as Shiraz and Isfahan, while also exploring the Zoroastrian and Islamic pilgrimage sites of Iran with visits to Yazd and the holy city of Qom, an important center of Shi’a Islam and cradle of the Islamic Revolution. Christina writes the following about her trip: “I feel disinclined to speak about my thoughts prior to my trip to Iran because they were so far from what I experienced. Iran, as this country is presently known, was once Persia. I suppose that I visited Iran, but what struck me was Persia. I saw many mountain villages whose origins dated back as far as the 9th century, and one constant I found in those places as well as the more modern cities, was the courtesy and hospitality of the people. Never in my life have I felt so welcome in a place that I assumed that I would be so displaced. The land, culture, and idealism has been manipulated by foreign elements surely, as history will note, by modern times even further, but remarkably the culture of Persia has remained so steadfast that the truest and proudest of its elements remain. It is a tough terrain that could only be inhabited by people of strength, as illustrated through their history. Throughout toils of war and faith, their art, calligraphy, and architecture resonate throughout the land as far as northern India and bordering China. This is a people and nation that should be revered for strength of cultural artistry, it runs in the blood of any who dare claim the region, and I am humbled and grateful for them having me as a guest; it was an invigorating venture that has illuminated my life.”



SECSOR

Several members of the Religion Department’s former and current Graduate Students have participated in the Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion meeting in March 2007 both presiding over sessions as well as delivering papers: **Kelley Williams** (MA, 08), **Adam Ware** (MA, 07), **Megan Summers** (MA, 07), **Katherine Daley-Bailey** (MA 04), **Dr. Mark Chancey** (MA, 92) who is currently teaching at the Southern Methodist University, **Amy Flynn** (MA, 06), **Ivy Campbell** (MA, 07), and **Amanda Smith** (MA, 06).

Sarah Richards (MA, 08), **Kelley Williams** (MA, 08), **Jordan Rothacker** (MA, 05) and **Amy Flynn** (MA, 06) have had papers accepted for the meeting in March 2008.



DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION FACULTY AND STAFF

Haider Bhuayan, Lecturer (University of Manitoba, Canada)
Arabic Language

Wayne Coppins, Assistant Professor (Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge)
New Testament Studies

Rouslan Elistratov, Lecturer (University of Claremont)
Philosophy of Religion and Theology

Richard Elliott Friedman, Ann and Jay Davis Professor of Jewish Studies(Harvard)
Hebrew Language and Literature, Jewish Studies

Alan Godlas, Associate Professor (University of California, Berkeley)
Islam, Quranic Hadith Studies, Arabic & Persian, Sufism

Kenneth Honerkamp, Associate Professor (Aix-en-Provence, France)
Arabic, Islam texts, Shariah (Islamic Law), North African Sufism

Russell Kirkland, Professor (Indiana University)
Asian Religions, Taoism, Chinese and Japan Religious

Beth LaRocca-Pitts, Lecturer (University of Claremont)
Old Testament

Sandy D. Martin, Professor and Department Head (Columbia University)
History of Christianity, American and African American
Religious History

Carolyn Jones Medine, Associate Professor (University of Virginia)
Religion and Literature, African American Religions and Literature,
Religious Theory and Thought, Woman's Spirituality and Writing

William L. Power, Professor (Emory)
Historical, Systematic, and Philosophical Theology, Philosophy of Religion

Randy Sturman, Lecturer (University of California - San Diego)
Religion and Anthropology, Law and Health

Jace Weaver, Professor and Director of the Institute of Native American Studies
(Union Theological Seminary)
Native American Cultures and Religious Traditions, Eschatology,
Apocalypticism

David S. Williams, Professor and Director of Honors Program (Hebrew Union College)
Judaism, Hebrew, Intertestamental Literature, Hebrew Bible

Zinetta McDonald, Business Manager I

Kimbley Scott, Administrative Assistant II

Please visit our website at www.uga.edu

Upcoming Special Guest Speaker

The Department of Religion is very delighted to announce that **Dr. Jan Willis** (BA and MA in Philosophy, Cornell University; PhD in Indic and Buddhist Studies, Columbia University) will be the speaker for our annual **George Howard Lecture Series**. She will visit our campus on April 16, 2008. Please check our website for more information concerning time, place, and topic. The lecture is open to the entire University and public.

Dr. Willis is Professor of Religion at Wesleyan University. She has studied with Tibetan Buddhists in India, Nepal, Switzerland and the United States for more than three decades, and has taught courses in Buddhism for twenty-five years. She is the author of *The Diamond Light: An Introduction to Tibetan Buddhist Meditation* (1972), *On Knowing Reality: The Tattvartha Chapter of Asanga's Bodhisattvabhumi* (1979), and *Enlightened Beings: Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition* (1995); *Dreaming Me: An African American Baptist-Buddhist Journey*. (2001), and the editor of *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet* (1989).

One of the earliest American scholar-practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism, Professor Willis has published numerous essays and articles on Buddhist meditation, hagiography, and women and Buddhism. She also enjoys NFL football.

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