

- We've Changed our Name
- Tune in for the CRSS Podcasts
- New Internship Opportunity!
- Find out what our CORH grads are doing

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From the Chair

Greetings from Chico State! As department chair since 2007, I would like to share some exciting changes that our faculty members have initiated on behalf of our students and curriculum.

The department recently made two significant name changes. The first consisted of changing the name of the department from "The Department of Religious Studies" to "The Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities." In making this change, we formally incorporated the Humanities Program and its students. The Humanities program (which focuses on the study of arts and ideas in historical and cultural context) consists of a major (the B.A. in Humanities) as well as several minors in Classical Civilization, Medieval Studies, Renaissance Studies, Cinema Studies, and Modern Jewish and Israel Studies. Religious Studies and the Humanities Program have been closely associated since Professor James Karman, Humanities Coordinator and formerly of the CSUC English Department, moved to Religious Studies in the early 2000s. After Prof. Karman's retirement, members of our department and staff took over the administration and advising of the Humanities program. It seemed reasonable to place Humanities students on an equal footing with students of religion and to give them equal billing because our students are now nearly evenly split between the two majors.

The name change might seem jarring for graduates of the department from days of yore from another perspective: why

"Comparative Religion" instead of "Religious Studies"? Our faculty long recognized that there is considerable confusion on the part of students and faculty across campus, as well as prospective employers, as to exactly what "Religious Studies" means. Over the years, people outside the department have assumed that the program somehow involves the teaching of theology--how to be religious. Of course this had never been a part of our classes or research. Changing the name to "The Department of Religion" might have acknowledged that our field of study was religion (just as "English," "History," or "Chemistry" are named for the topics of inquiry in these departments), but questions might have remained for those unaware of the distinction between the study and practice of religion, or between religion and theology. "Comparative Religion" seemed the best option. The name clearly communicates that we study a variety of religions rather than working within a single tradition.

The second recent name change involves our center, formerly called the Religion and Public Education Resource Center (RPERC), founded in 1995 by Professor Bruce Grelle. Our faculty will continue to work on the teaching of religion in public education as a project--the Religion and Public Education Project (RPEP). However, the center itself has been renamed "The Center for the Public Understanding of Religion" (CPUR).

As we settle into the new name of our department and our center, we are eager to increase the scope of our educational mission in order to help create a religiously literate public. Our majors and minors will work to promote the study of the humanities, world religions, and reasoned dialogue about religion. Meanwhile, the Center will foster study of such topics as the growth of religion on the internet, the place of religion in healthcare, corrections, commerce, social work, electoral politics, and the military, and the role of religion in democratic discourse. It will do so by means of grant-sponsored initiatives, scholarly conferences, print and online publications, public roundtables, online student projects, and eventually, a virtual museum.

A final note: please don't hesitate to contact us with questions, ideas, and news of your own--we are always interested in hearing from former students, community members, and those who are simply interested in what fascinates us (corh@csuchico.edu). We'd love if you would "like" the Religious Studies at Chico State Alumni page or the CSUC Culture and Religion Student Society (on facebook.com). And if you have the means, please consider giving a gift to the department or the center (<http://www.csuchico.edu/corh/> or <http://www.csuchico.edu/cpur/>).



“What are you going to do with that?”

CULTURE AND RELIGION STUDENT SOCIETY

New Internship in Religious Studies

“Religious Studies majors are used to being asked about the practical value of their field of study, and have developed countless answers: teach, go to grad school, start a business; lead a non-profit, save the world. A new internship in Religious Studies will help students with any of those goals develop some practical skills while tackling an issue of vital importance in today’s world: religious difference.

The internship began when Professor Kate McCarthy and four Chico State students participated in an Interfaith Leadership Institute in Chicago in the summer of 2012. Out of that 3-day workshop, the Chico State Religious Diversity Association (RDA) was

born. You may have seen or participated in some of the RDA’s activities last year: a Conversation on Diversity called “Beyond Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa,” a poster-making party to prepare a protest response to the “angry preachers” who visit our campus, a panel discussion on student religious diversity, or the “Unexpected Identities” photo project.

You’ll see more of RDA this year because student leaders now have the opportunity to earn internship units for their work with this organization. This semester’s six RDA interns—all religious studies majors and minors—will be researching and writing about local and regional religious

diversity, coordinating joint service projects among campus religious groups, continuing the Unexpected Identities project, and creating learning modules about religious diversity for K-12 and college classroom use. This is a great chance to develop skills in public speaking, event planning, and leadership; to build organizational networks; and to apply classroom knowledge of world religions to the real-world challenge of raising religious literacy and promoting inter-religious understanding and cooperation.

Because that’s what you can do with a Religious Studies degree.

CORH Student Society

This semester, the student body of Comparative Religion is happy to announce that the Religious Studies Student Society has made a strong revival as the Culture and Religion Student Society. Under the leadership of Austin Walker serving as president and Eric Weiland serving as vice president, we are excited to announce a host of activities for this semester, chief among them being a podcast, a trip to San Francisco to the De Young museum and the Legion of Honor, and promoting events on campus related to religion

(for example our theatre department’s performance of “Dr. Faustus”). In addition, the introduction of OrgSync as one of our resources allows us to keep an ongoing forum of our activities and perhaps in the near future discussion of our podcasts or global events relevant to comparative religion.

On the note of our podcasts, our goal is to have biweekly broadcasts in which we have a conversation-based interview be-

tween four students and a visiting scholar, a local religious leader, or one of our own Comparative Religion faculty members. Topics will range from opinion on belief, hot-button issues, and more! Our goal with this is to create an enjoyable medium through which people can get a taste of open dialogue on comparative religion and perhaps learn a thing or two on the topic discussed, as well as having this as a standing function of the CRSS that can continue once the current executives graduate.

Faculty News—Jason Clower and Snoot



SNOOT

To celebrate our tenure, Snoot and I are finishing our translation of a book of

essays by Mou Zongsan (1909-1995), who is the big name in modern Chinese philosophy, and ours will be the first English translation of any of his works. He is a subtle thinker who borrows a lot of inspiration from Buddhism, and he is especially fun to translate because he can be truculent and opinionated. With this book we're going to cross an item off our bucket list: citing a source written in the artificial language of Esperanto in a serious scholarly publication. I had been angling to do this for years when I stumbled across a moving memoir of wartime Shanghai composed in Esperanto by a Japanese leftist, and it turned out to be perfect for the

introduction to my book. Finally, I am preparing a graduate course on modern Buddhism that I will offer next summer with Eyal Aviv of George Washington University at Dharma Drum University, a Buddhist institution in Taiwan. Teaching a doctoral seminar will be great; teaching a doctoral seminar in Chinese will probably mean a few days of panic before I get back in the saddle.

Anybody know how to say "post-colonial renegotiation of the international division of labor from socialized capital as refracted through post-modern appropriations of Buddhism" in Mandarin?

Laura Nice

I have taught for the Humanities Program since 2007, regularly offering both a lower-division survey course and the major capstone course where students prepare a 15-20 page research essay on an interdisciplinary topic. Students have the flexibility to explore virtually any

topic – from the ancient world to the present – though each capstone provides a theoretical framework so that participants in the seminar have a common vocabulary and can thus share a culminating experience. In recent semesters, seminars have focused upon the city (Spring 14), personal and collective memory (Spring 13), Homer's *Odyssey* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (Spring 12), beauty and ugliness (Spring 11), aesthetics and ethics (Spring 10). Students present their completed projects in writing, of course, but also in oral presentations to their peers in the classroom, in the program at the annual Religious Stud-

ies and Humanities student symposium, and in the college at the Humanities and Fine Arts student symposium. For several students, their research for the capstone seminar served as entrance essays for graduate programs around the country. Beyond the classroom, while serving on the board of the directors at a local art gallery, I established an internship program that was tailored specifically to the qualifications and talents of Humanities majors and minors.

Bruce Grelle

This year I have a couple of anniversaries on my mind. Fall 2013 marks the beginning of my 25th year of teaching at CSU, Chico! My courses this semester include RELS 247 "Religion, Ethics, and Ecology," which is part of the Sustainability

pathway in the new general education program on campus. For the first time since 2010 I am teaching RELS 348 "Jesus, Buddha, Marx: Comparative Ethics," and I have several online sections of RELS 358 "Religion and American Public Schools," a course designed especially for future teachers. 2013 is the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision in the case of *Abington School District v. Schempp*, which distinguished between *devotional* and *academic* approaches to the study of religion and the Bible and cleared the way for teaching *about* religion in public schools and uni-



Faculty News, *continued*

versities in a manner that is consistent with the First Amendment separation of church and state. As co-chair of the American Academy of Religion's group on "Religion in Public Schools: International Perspectives," I have organized two panels on the continuing relevance of the *Schempp* decision at the AAR's upcoming annual meeting in Baltimore. I have also been invited to present a paper at a conference titled "Whose Religion? Education about Religion in Public Schools" at

the University of Ottawa in November.

Last fall I had a sabbatical leave during which I worked on a book titled *Antonio Gramsci and the Question of Religion: Ethics, Ideology, and Hegemony*, which is under contract with Acumen Publishing based in the UK. I also published two book chapters dealing with religion education: "Promoting Civic and Religious Literacy in Public Schools: The California 3 Rs Project," in

Religion in the Schools: Negotiating the New Commons, (Michael D. Waggoner, editor, Roman & Littlefield Education, New York, 2013); and "The First Amendment Consensus Approach to Teaching about Religion in U.S. Public Schools: Applications and Assessment," in *Civility and Education in a World of Religious Pluralism*, (Vincent F. Biondo, III, and Andrew Fiala, co-editors, Routledge, New York,

Jeanne Lawrence



An important mission of the Humanities Program is the service it provides to CSUC's Liberal Studies majors. These are students who plan to become elementary school or middle school teachers, and Arts & Ideas: Renaissance to Modern (HUM 222) is a required course in their curriculum. For many of these students, HUM 222 is their first (and often only) experience with the world of Western literature, art, architecture, music and philosophy in terms of interpretation, analysis and critical thinking. Most of the other courses in the Liberal Studies curriculum focus on subject matter and approaches specific to teaching elementary and middle-school – that is, Liberal Studies students are learning what to teach, and how to teach, in those environments. What

HUMN222 provides is a broader view of what human beings have achieved in the past and can create in the future. My goal in teaching 222 is to help my students feel comfortable looking at, thinking about and interpreting arts and literature -- not because they will necessarily be teaching the specific things we cover in class, but because in the long run knowledge of the arts and literature, and the intellectual curiosity that knowledge can spawn, will make them better teachers (and more interesting individuals!). For example, many HUM 222 students have never been inside an art gallery or museum before taking the class; to help them think of an art gallery entrance as a bridge rather than a barrier, one

assignment in my class requires them to write about a work of art currently shown in one of the galleries we have on campus. Once they cross into the Turner Print Museum or the University Art Gallery, it becomes much easier for them to return on their own.

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Sarah Pike

My research continues to focus on new religious movements, festivals, rituals and sacred space. This past year I've been working on various aspects of a book tentatively titled "Internal Revolutions: Childhood Experience and Ritual Action in Radical Environmentalism and Animal Rights Activism." My essay "Radical Animal Rights and Environmental Activism As Rites of

Passage" was published in "The Denial of Ritual," a special issue of the *Journal of Ritual Studies* (July 2013). Then this past spring, a short piece about my work was published in the online London-based magazine *Aeon* in May (<http://www.aeonmagazine.com/nature-and-cosmos/sarah-pike-radical-environmentalists/>) and I gave a presentation based on my research in South Africa last April at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My presentation in South Africa was associated with my role as one of sixteen scholars in the project "Reassembling Democracy: Ritual as Cultural Resource," a four-year (2013-2016) collaborative research project

funded by the Norwegian Research Council to study cultural conditions underlying social change. The research group includes scholars from North America, Europe and Africa working on case studies in Norway, Ghana, South Africa, Poland, India, England, Canada and the U.S. Alongside my ethnographic research at radical environmentalist gatherings, I also continue to study contemporary American festivals, including the Burning Man festival, and have a new article coming out about that work in early 2014 called "Selling Infinite Selves: Youth Culture and Contemporary Festivals."

Joel Zimbelman

I've just returned to teaching in the Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities after a seven year hiatus in administration on our campus. As I prepare to teach classes this coming spring, I'll be focusing on courses in Western humanities, the comparative study of religion,

and ethics and moral theory. I continue to pursue research in biomedical ethics that focuses on issues at the end of life (withholding and withdrawing life sustaining treatment, assisted suicide). However, several recent trips overseas and into Asia in particular have allowed me to begin to focus my interests in health and healing practices across cultures. My hope is to introduce a course on "Health and healing in the world's religious and cultural traditions" in a couple of years. I think that such a class would allow students to experience cultural differences and perspectives around a

topic that is important to all of the world's population, and give those of us raised in the West a better appreciation of our own views of health, medicine, nursing, and public health as we compare these perspectives with other traditions.

Daniel Veidlinger

I have been very excited about developing a new course named "Science and Religion" that is in the Science, Technology and Values General Education pathway. This is a topic of great importance for modern life and covers issues such as creationism versus evolution and whether scientific developments can really help us

answer fundamental questions such as whether there is a God or whether we have a soul. Because of a few prominent cases such as the persecution of Galileo and of Tennessee teacher John Scopes who tried to teach evolution in the classroom, people often believe that religion is inimical to scientific developments. However, people do not generally realize the seminal contributions that religions have made to science, such as the Islamic advances in astronomy that were made in the service of knowing when to pray, and European developments in clock-



Faculty News, *continued*

work that were driven by that same goal.

In my research, I have been working for the last few years on the role of communication technologies in spreading Buddhism. In particular, I am fascinated by the affinity of the Dharma for the Internet. Buddhism is one of the fastest growing religions amongst the wired set, and I have been investigating whether this is connected to the central place that the idea of interconnection has in Buddhist philoso-

phy. I have noted that in pre-modern times, Buddhism also succeeded mightily in environments that, like the Internet, brought many different people and ideas together in complex and heterogeneous networks of communication, transportation, and interaction such as the Silk Road. Could there be a connection between the forces that drove the success of Buddhism along the Silk Road and those that drive it along the Internet?

I hope to publish a book on this topic this year, as well as an edited volume based on a conference that I organized on this topic in Chico in 2011, during which several scholars from around North America came to Colusa Hall and discussed Buddhism and Digital Media.

Jed Wyrick



As department chair, I lead a thrilling life involving frequent university meetings and institutional deadlines. However, I have been fortunate to continue to teach my favorite courses (Greek Myth and Ritual; C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien: Theology and Myth; Judaism and the Minority Tradition; New Testament; and Arts and Ideas of the Ancient and Medieval World) and even to develop new ones (Jews, Muslims, and the West; and Evolution and/of Religion). I have also been able to serve as the advisor for the students in the Humanities major and minors—and it's always enjoyable to speak with students one-on-one. My research continues to involve my fascination with the legends that surround the canonical literatures of ancient Israel and Greece. This

summer, I completed an essay entitled "The Vanishing Scriptural Scaffolding of *The Book of the Words of Jannes and Jambres* and Its Kindred Legends." The essay explores traditions about the Egyptian magician brothers, named Jannes and Jambres in Jewish and Christian post-biblical sources, who are said to have opposed Moses and Aaron during the time of the Exodus. In particular, I give an explanation for how these legends originated. I also investigate a text that calls itself "The Book of the Words of Jannes and Jambres," preserved in papyrus fragments (in their original Greek language) and in a page of a medieval codex (in Latin translation, together with two illustrations). This essay is the

outgrowth of a paper that I delivered in Leuven, Belgium at the Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense on Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Scriptures at the Katholieke Universiteit in July 2012; it will appear in an edited volume containing essays from this colloquium. This past winter I also completed an article called "The Evolving Conceptualization of Prophetic Authorship in the Book of Jeremiah," which is being considered for publication in an Israeli periodical, the *Journal of Culture Analysis*.

My main scholarly work in the past five or more years has involved the writings of a post-biblical Jewish writer from Egypt in the Ptolemaic period (332-30 BCE) named Artapanus. Artapanus wrote a work in ancient Greek, pre-

Faculty News, continued

served only in the writing of the church father Eusebius, that consists of legendary biographies of three biblical patriarchs. This investigation has morphed into what I hope soon to publish as two separate books. The first of these is (at

least for the moment) called *Before the Septuagint: Artapanus and the Culture of Early Ptolemaic Egypt*; it deals with the literary and historical context in which I argue that Artapanus wrote. The second is currently called *Hebrew Biblical Interpretation in the Patriarchal Biographies of Artapanus*; it ex-

plores the literary genre that Artapanus employed and the way that the fantastic elements of his text regarding the lives of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses resulted from his interpretation of minute details in the Hebrew Pentateuch.

Najma Yousefi

As I reflect on my first year at Chico State (2012–2013), I realize that I have accomplished quite a bit in teaching, service, and research. I teach “Islam and the World” (HIST 261/RELS 202) every fall and offer a two-sequence Middle Eastern History—“The Middle East before 1800” (HIST 362) and “The Middle

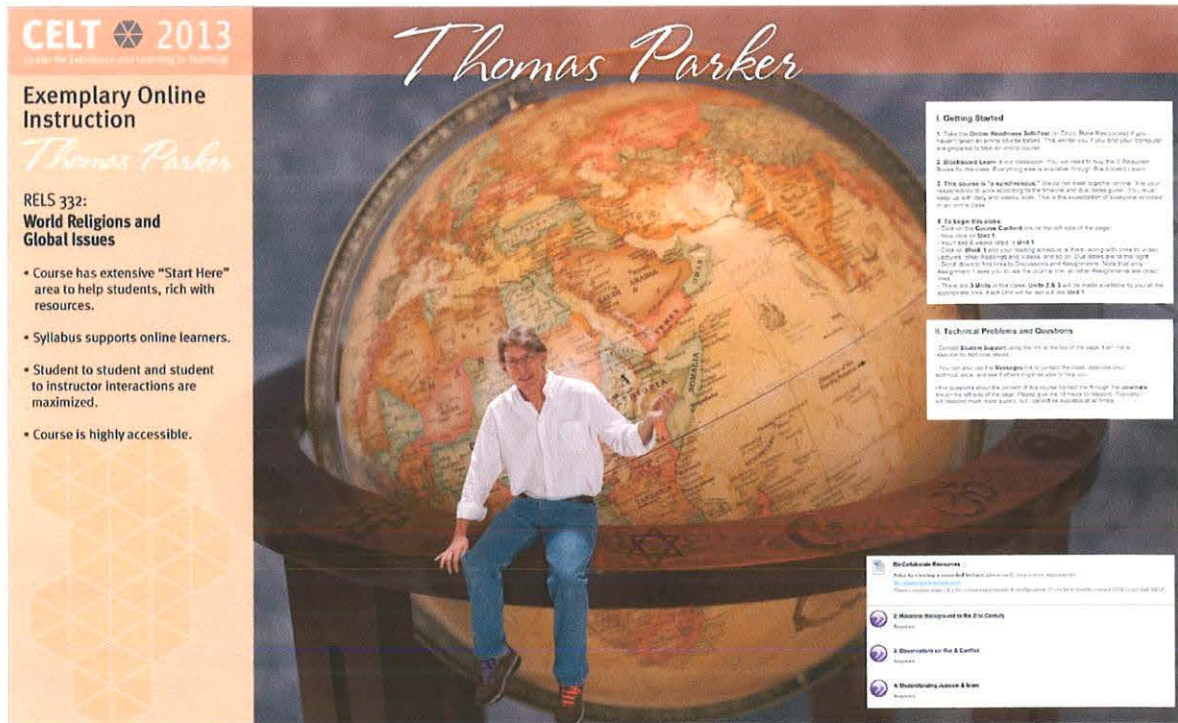
East after 1800” (HIST 363)— in the fall and spring, respectively. Both courses are being added to the International Studies General Education Pathway. Meanwhile, I took over as the new adviser of the Middle East Studies Minor and started working with colleagues in the participating departments to revamp the Minor. To that end, I proposed and received approval for a new GE course, titled “Introduction to Middle East Studies” (MEST 110) which I will teach in the spring 2014. During the summer

2013, I co-taught a study abroad program in Turkey with Prof. Tugrul Keskin of Portland State University. We were fortunate to have an excellent group of students who enjoyed learning about Turkish society, culture, and politics while visiting several cities and many historic sites. While in Istanbul, I spent long hours at the magnificent Sulaymanieh library, exploring Islamic manuscripts in land tax and occult sciences, and managed to ob-

COHR CONNECTIONS — Keep in touch!

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AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



- TOM PARKER — Outstanding Online Instruction Award
- JED WYRICK — Outstanding Academic Advisor Award in 2012
- JASON CLOWER — Assessment Coordinator for GE Health & Well-Being Pathway
- KATE McCARTHY — GE Pathway Coordinator

Alumni News

Check out what our grads are doing:

- Michael Butcher (B.A in Religious Studies 2013) is doing graduate work on Buddhism at Indiana University in Bloomington.
- Hannah Nielsen (B.A in Religious Studies 2013) is studying at Princeton Theological Seminary.
- Rick Niese (B.A in Religious Studies 2013) is teaching English in rural China.
- Sarah (Nimmo) Gagnebin (...) is a hospital chaplain at Sutter Hospital in Sacramento.
- Ben Jaks and Happy Davis recently welcomed a baby girl into the world called Lylah.
- Jason Deane (B.A in Religious Studies 2012) is doing graduate work in the Teaching Languages Internationally program at Chico.
- Eric Garabay received a \$3000 scholarship to help him fund his studies abroad at Florianopolis University in Brazil in Portuguese.
- Katy Sylvia is doing a Masters Degree in Political Science at Chico.
- Heather Coons is teaching in Lodi California.
- Ally Wilson is completing her graduate studies at Princeton Theological Seminary.
- Michelle Nation is teaching at a private school in San Jose.
- Patrick Bultema was recently named outstanding alum for the HFA college.
- Audrey Allas Lycourinou is doing graduate work in Anthropology at Durham University in England.
- Jeff Veitch (B.A. in Religious Studies, 2009) received an M.A.in Biblical Studies from the Graduate Theological Union, an M.A. in Classical Art and Archaeology from King's College London, and is currently working on his PhD in Archaeology at the University of Kent.
- Andrew Lavin (B.A. in Religious Studies, 2010) is pursuing a M.A. in Philosophy at San Jose State university, where he currently also serves as an instructor.
- Luke Ham (B.A. in Religious Studies, 2009) received his M.Div. from the Pacific School of Religion and is now Pastor at San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church.
- Erin Goldfarb (B.A. in Religious Studies and Art History, 2006) is Assistant Director of Development for the College of Business and Economics at California State University, Northridge.
- Whitney Thayne (B.A. in Humanities and Theatre Arts, 2011) is a Wardrobe Attendant at Wynn Las Vegas.
- Colleen Garrett (B.A. in Humanities, 2001) completed an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language at the [School for International Training, Graduate Institute](#) . She is currently a Design Manager for Kathy Davis Associates, Inc., an [Acculturation Specialist](#) for [Catholic Charities Migration & Refugee Services](#), and a Program Assistant for [Public Consulting Group](#).
- Katie Fox (B.A. in Humanities and History, 2011) is pursuing a Master of Arts (MA), [Human Development and Family Studies](#), [Family and Community Services](#) at the [University of Missouri-Columbia](#).
- Kellie Marie Lavin (B.A. in Humanities, 2010) completed a Single-Subject Social Science Credential and is a [Student Services Specialist](#) at [Stanford University](#).
- Jillian Zarifis (B.A. in Humanities and International Relations, 2010) is a Global Immigration Paralegal at [Pearl Law Group](#).

Alumni News, *continued*

- Willow Sharkey (B.A. in Humanities, 2007) received her M.A. in Art History from California State University, Chico and is currently a lecturer in Art History at Chico State as well as an arts writer for Chico News & Review.
- Leigh Bryan (B.A. in Humanities, 2010) received her [Master of Fine Arts in Ancient Greek and Roman Studies](#) from Brandeis University and recently returned from an archeological dig in northern Israel.
- Lauren Burnett (B.A. in Religious Studies and Sociology, 2007) received her Master of Science in Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2009. She is currently a Consultant for Praescient Analytics.
- Jason Deane (B.A. in Religious Studies and Asian Studies, 2012) was an English instructor at the [Ratchaburikanukroh Secondary School - Ratchaburi, Thailand](#) and is currently in the Teaching International Languages M.A. program at CSU, Chico.
- Vernon Ruiz (B.A. in Religious Studies and Philosophy, 2004) received his M.A. in Philosophy: Professional Ethics from George Mason University and is manager of VA Runner.
- Christy Killion (B.A. in Humanities and Public Relations, 2009) is a Project Engineer at Vance Brown, Inc., onsite at Stanford University.
- Jordan Wise (B.A. in Religious Studies, 2008) is [Kindergarten Grade Level Lead](#) at [Rocketship Education](#). Having received her multiple subject teaching credential from [California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo](#) in 2011, she is currently pursuing an M.A. in Education at San Jose State University
- Susan Nicolls (B.A. in Religious Studies and International Relations, 2008) is pursuing a J. D. at [Regent University School of Law](#) and is an Intern for the [Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia](#)
- Kate Buckley (B.A. in Humanities, 1991) received her Masters in Social Science with an emphasis in Career Counseling from California State University, Chico and is an Advisor at the CSU, Chico Career Center.
- William Hovey II (B.A. in Religious Studies and History, 2005) received his M.A. in Humanities and Religious Studies at CSU Sacramento in 2010 and is currently an Account Executive at LIME Works.
- Jacob Acosta (B.A. in Religious Studies and Philosophy, 2010) is Assistant Manager at Jos. A. Bank Clothiers.
- Katy Sylvia (B.A. in Religious Studies, 2007) is completing her M.A. in Political Science at CSU, Chico, where she is an instructor.
- Fawn Russell (B.A. in Religious Studies, 2005) is pursuing a Master of Library & Information Science (M.L.I.S.) from San Jose State University.
- Julie Sullivan (B.A. in Religious Studies and History, 2010) received her Master of Arts (M.A.) in [Irish and Irish-American Studies](#) at [New York University](#) and is working for Admissions & Records at Diablo Valley College.
- Erik Petersen (B.A. in Religious Studies, 2001) is a Manager of Product Marketing at [Arrow Electronics](#).
- Ryan Williams (B.A. in Religious Studies and Computer Science, 2012), is in the Master's program in Computer Science at CSU, Chico and is a Software Developer at SunGard Public Sector.

CALIFORNIA
STATE
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Chico

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What is Religious Studies?

Religious Studies is a multidisciplinary field that takes a scholarly approach to the study of religious experiences, myths, rituals, doctrines, and the institutions of human beings in diverse times and places. It draws on perspectives from the Humanities and social sciences in order to understand the meaning and impact of religious and non-religious ideas, values, and practices.

