

CORH CONNECTION:

FROM THE NEW CHAIR, SARAH PIKE



Greetings to all colleagues, alumni, friends, and supporters of the Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities! This past August, I took up my new position as department chair after our sitting chair Kate McCarthy was tapped to be Dean of Undergraduate Education. Congratulations to her on this important achievement, and also to our colleague Jed Wyrick who has been elected chair of the Academic Senate. Although I have been teaching in the department for over 20 years, this is my first

time serving as chair. There has been a lot to learn during these first months on the job and I have been fortunate to have the help of Joel Zimbelman and Jed Wyrick, two previous and long-serving chairs, who have made my transition into the position much easier than it otherwise would have been. Under my watch, but with the help of many others, the department has launched a new online major that includes a number of new and exciting courses that are all available both online and in person. As chair, one of my main goals is to ensure the new major takes off, opening up opportunities for students to complete their degrees even if they are not able to take classes on campus. At the same time, I have also begun a review and revision of the Humanities major to make it more streamlined and coherent for students. During my tenure as chair, I hope to strengthen our Religious Studies and Humanities major and minor programs and see them thrive, even at a time when humanistic inquiry is not always as valued and appreciated as it should be.

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Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

Online Degree Completion Program

Overview:

Our new compact and fully online degree offers both deep knowledge of major religious traditions and comprehensive exploration of the role of religion in the contemporary world. In courses like “Religion, Politics and Conflict,” “Religion, Sex, and Gender,” “Religion, Science and Technology” and the capstone “Religion, Public Life and the Professions,” students will work closely with outstanding professors in small classes that will foster a challenging but rewarding learning environment.

“We are extremely proud of this new BA program as the only online religious studies degree program in the state of California and one of only five globally,” said Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, Robert Knight. “Development of the program comes at a time when public understanding of religion and its connections with multiple cultures and inter-cultural understanding is perhaps more important than it has ever been.”

These courses will prepare students for responsible citizenship in the global world and will train them to be sensitive to the ethnic, religious, and socio-economic identities that people bring to the table. This program will produce well-rounded and educated problem solvers, fluent writers, and people who can approach problems from many different perspectives. This degree is aimed at those who have completed at least two years of college but don't have a four-year degree. It is a degree completion program, so only junior and senior level courses are offered.

Graduates of our program have gone on to successful careers in teaching, business (corporate and start-ups), law, health care administration, national security, high school teaching, and higher education. Religious Studies majors are especially well prepared for work in public service and public policy, international affairs, and non-profit leadership as a result of their sensitivity to issues of diversity, their global and cultural literacy, and their ability to reflect on questions of meaning and value in complex social contexts.

Overview of Coursework

The new eleven course, 34-unit BA degree program is designed optimally to be completed in four semesters along with all other required courses needed to complete a full college BA, and all the courses will be offered in an online format, as well as in the classroom, with majors courses taken synchronously (live online attendance) or asynchronously (on your own 24/7 schedule) as needed by the student.

In addition to the 34-units in Religious Studies, our program will offer nine units of upper division general education (a Chico State requirement) and another seventeen units of upper division elective coursework—all delivered online.

Degree Program (continued...)

A typical program of study will consist of the following:

Fall Semester Year 1:

Religions of South Asia

Religions of East Asia

Roots of Judaism, Christianity, Islam

Elective

Elective

Fall Semester Year 2:

Religion, Politics, and Conflict

Theories and Criticisms of Religion

Religion, Science and Technology or Religion and the Arts

An upper division GE course—Natural Science

Elective

Spring Semester Year 1:

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam since the Crusades

Religion in America

Religion and Nature

An upper division GE course—Social Science
Elective

Spring Semester, Year 2:

Capstone: Religion, Public Life, and the Professions

Religion, Sex, and Gender

An upper division GE course—Humanities
Elective

Elective



National Council for the Social Studies Affirms Religious Studies as Essential to Education for Citizenship in a Diverse Nation and World —Bruce Grelle

In June 2017, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) added a religious studies supplement to its *College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework*. The C3 Framework is widely used by state and school district curriculum experts for social studies standards and curriculum development.



The new “Religious Studies Companion Document for the C3 Framework” recognizes religious studies as an integral part of the social studies curriculum in K-12 schools. The supplement promotes an academic approach that encourages student awareness of religions, but not acceptance of a particular religion; studying about religion, but not practicing religion; exposing students to a diversity of religious views, but not imposing any particular view; and educating students about all religions, but not promoting or denigrating religion. This approach was initially articulated by James V. Panoch and adopted by the First Amendment Center several decades ago. It was further developed in the “American Academy of Religion Guidelines for Teaching about Religion in K-12 Public Schools in the United States,” published in 2010. The new document also builds on a 2014 NCSS position statement titled “Study

About Religions in the Social Studies Curriculum.”

The National Council for the Social Studies was founded in 1921 and is the largest professional association in the country devoted solely to social studies education. NCSS regards social studies as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. The NCSS membership consists of K-12 classroom teachers, college and university faculty members, curriculum designers and specialists, social studies supervisors, and leaders in the various disciplines that constitute the social studies. The entire C3 Framework, including the religious studies supplement (pp. 92-96), is available at www.socialstudies.org/c3.

CORH faculty member Bruce Grelle participated in a panel discussion of the religious studies supplement to the C3 Framework at the annual meeting of the NCSS in San Francisco on November 18, 2017.

adapted from—

<https://www.socialstudies.org/news/c3-framework-supplement-academic-study-religion>

Martin Luther Panel

— Joel Zimbelman

To commemorate the start of the Protestant Reformation, the College of HFA sponsored in early November a Humanities Roundtable on “Martin Luther: 500th Anniversary of the Ninety-Five Theses.” Jason Nice of History, Erin Kelly of English, and Joel Zimbelman of Comparative Religion and Humanities gave short presentations on the events leading up to the fateful October day in 1517 when Luther let loose his barrage against the organized Catholic Church in Europe. Dr. Nice provided a rich context of events leading up to the indulgences controversy that set Luther off, and discussed as well the ways in which Papal power and building projects in Rome in the 16th century exacerbated regional tensions throughout the Holy Roman Empire. Dr. Zimbelman delved into the immediate context of Luther’s work, including an exploration of various institutional arrangements, historical events, and personal characteristics that gave Luther the traction he needed to move the Protestant Reformation forward. Dr. Kelly focused her analysis on texts, translations, and the transmission of both biblical materials and reports (through written records and woodcuts) of martyrdom and related events across Europe. The translation of the Bible into

English and the further fragmenting of the English Protestant movement after Henry VIII provided a vivid example of the ways that the Protestant Reformation spread beyond Germany, and involved the Catholic Church in its own reforming initiatives and responses. The audience of about 180 students, faculty and community members kept the conversation going for quite a while, and questions ranged from theological and historical issues to those about how the reformers themselves packaged and sold their activities to the larger public. It was a great evening, and made clear that even a half millennium later, Luther’s actions and writings have the ability to capture our imagination.



Migration in the Abrahamic Traditions

—Kate McCarthy

Opening Remarks at the Chico Area Interfaith Council Annual Dinner, October 19, 2017

Over 244 million people now live in a country other than that of their birth, the highest number ever recorded. We Americans are made aware of this migration through new faces in the supermarket, lines at the airport, our increasingly eclectic food truck options, and unfortunately through an almost daily assault of xenophobic political rhetoric. For many of us this all feels quite new. But if we take our scriptural traditions at their word, there is nothing new at all about all this coming and going.

Stories of movement and migration run through the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam like an insistent rhythm. Abraham, founding parent of the western monotheisms, is called not only to believe in the one God, but also to pull up stakes and move to an as-yet-unknown land. God's first word to Abraham, in fact, is "Go." Generations later, Moses leads the Exodus from slavery in Egypt and a migration through the desert, a journey through which the Jews become a covenanted people of God.

In the New Testament, Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt shortly after Jesus' birth to escape his predicted murder. And the adult Jesus' public ministry is entirely itinerant, he and his followers moving from town to town, house to house, wherever they could get a hearing for their radical vision of the Kingdom of God. They were in a sense immigrants in their own land, leaving behind homes and family obligations for a life on the road at the mercy of hospitable strangers.

Muslims trace the beginning of their calendar to the *hijrah*, the flight of the Prophet Mohammad

and his followers from the city of Mecca to Medina, 280 miles north. It was here that the Islamic vision of a holy community, bound not by tribal loyalty but by common submission to the one God began to take shape. Here, where Muslims were a small minority, Mohammed used his political skills to negotiate the foundations for a peaceful multi-cultural society.

The migratory journey is a powerful metaphor, suggesting at least three themes common to the Abrahamic traditions. First, that the fully lived life requires at some point a certain dislocation,

Abrahamic traditions demand that we welcome and identify with the dispossessed immigrant.

a breaking away from what is comfortable for adventure into the frightening unknown. Second, that all homelands are provisional. Ultimately, according to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions, the earth and all its lands belong to God; we humans are just passing through. Even with their promised destinations of holy cities and nations, these stories elevate the journey itself to religious significance, pointing to liminality or in-between-ness as a vital spiritual state. Finally, these stories suggest that religions are cumulative things, not neatly defined once and for all, but traveling encounters—sometimes peaceable, sometimes violent—with different peoples, whose languages, foods, and other cultural practices find their way, invited or not, into the tradition. A religious community that truly embraces its migration stories is one that also embraces the hybridity of all religious and cultural identity.

But most importantly these traditions demand that we welcome and identify with the dispo-

Migration (continued.....)

assessed immigrant. Hospitality to the stranger is arguably one of the strongest common themes in the three traditions. “The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born,” Leviticus instructs. “Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.” That last line is important. The line between foreigner and native is erased because all are under the care of the one God. If God is truly God, these texts suggest, then there is no basis for raising one group above another; to do so would be not just unkind but idolatrous. This then demands not only the charitable response of the canned food drive for refugees, but the interrogation of the political and economic systems that create refugees in the first place.

But it must be acknowledged: The lands to which the sacred figures in these texts are led are in fact promised *to them*. The scriptures

would seem then to justify as much wall-construction as bridge-building. These traditions are not easily put in the service of a vision of a borderless world. All three traditions speak to the value of a well-defined community with the space to enact its own vision of peoplehood. In fact, one cannot exercise the virtue of hospitality without the reality of borders and strangers crossing them. This then is the challenge these texts present. At their best—whether in medieval Cordoba or contemporary Chico—these three traditions have found ways to embody empathy, compassion, and justice in pluralistic settings without sacrificing their own identity and uniqueness. And if our traditions haven’t often enough realized these ideals in our past, we always have new opportunities to get it right.



Conference on Religion, Science and the Modern World April 8, 2017—Gregory Cootsona

The Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities convened a conference on April 8, 2017 entitled “Religion, Science, and the Modern World” in order to address questions that have arisen in the media, the public and academia surrounding this important subject. The rise of science has often been set against the decline of religion in what many see as a zero sum game, with many commonly perceiving these two domains as locked in mortal combat, where one’s loss is the other’s gain. The debate between religion and science has also been framed largely as *Christianity* and Science, whether from its detractors or promoters, which marginalizes the many different attitudes towards science found in the other religions of the world. This conference intended to go further than these parochial and antagonistic claims to set “religion and science” within a religiously pluralistic dialogue that recognizes many different relationships between the two besides conflict, such as cooperation and integration. It was meant to begin the work of defining the relationship between these powerful cultural forces in a more nuanced and sophisticated way than is often done.

The conference featured four speakers, Gregory Coostona, Daniel Veidlinger and Sarah Pike from CORH and John Mahoney from Biology. After each talk, Joel Zimbelman moderated a lively interaction with the speakers and the audience of about forty persons. (To see videos of the event, begin your tour here:

[https://media.csuchico.edu/media/Budhist+Attitudes+Towards+Science+and+Technology/o_r023ioxy.\)](https://media.csuchico.edu/media/Budhist+Attitudes+Towards+Science+and+Technology/o_r023ioxy.)

Daniel Veidlinger, a professor of Asian religions, said that Buddhism has long been considered a religion that is more amenable to scientific ways of thinking than many others. While divinities are mentioned in the texts, Buddhism does not require belief in a god as part of its core doctrines, but focuses rather on techniques such as meditation whose benefits can be scientifically investigated. The Buddha and other important figures in the religion have also spoken of the importance of using empirical experience to help guide one’s beliefs and practices. Furthermore, Buddhists have used their knowledge of science to achieve technological breakthroughs such as the printing press. Professor Veidlinger warned not to mistake Buddhism with science, as is sometimes done, but he said it was important to appreciate Buddhism’s more empirical attitude and its willingness to rely on the data of our senses rather than blind adherence to ancient texts in our quest for enlightenment and wisdom.

Religion and Science (continued...)

Greg Cootsona, CORH Lecturer and conference convener, addressed the topic of “Emerging Adults on Religion and Science.” He looked at what the future contours of the relationship between religion, science, and technology might be, given the work he has done in surveys and interviews with 18-30 year olds (or emerging adults). It appears that religion and science will become more pluralized, and will have to include issues of sexuality as well as technology (which has often been considered entirely separate from religion). Dr. Cootsona is currently writing the manuscript for *Science and Religion in the United States: The Present State and Future Directions* to be published in 2019.

To enhance this dialogue, it was important to hear the insights of one practicing scientist. John Mahoney, Professor of Biological Sciences at Chico State, took on the topic of “Many Religions, One Science,” in which he described the notable contrast between the methods and insights of science and the religions. Dr. Mahoney spoke about the importance of maintaining a skeptical attitude towards phenomena for which there is no independently verified evidence, and emphasized that religions do not usually allow for repeatable experiments that can confirm or deny their claims, which is a key element in attaining scientific knowledge. Dr. Mahoney, a superb guitar player, enhanced his talk with a short

musical piece he co-wrote with Dr. Veidlinger.

Sarah Pike, who specializes in New Religions and Paganism, offered the final talk on “Nature Religions and the Spiritualization of Science” by looking at movements in science such as the Gaia Hypothesis and Fritjof Capra’s connection of quantum science with Hindu thought, as well as the alternative vision that nature religions offer for interacting with science. These approaches break down the standard versions of “science and religion” and present modes that are increasingly important for understanding our culture.

The conference provided for a lively interaction with members of the community, faculty from CORH and other departments, and among the presenters. There are many other directions for similar events, all of which means that a follow-up conference is envisioned for 2018.



Conference on Religion in the Public Sphere—Daniel Veidlinger

On September 15 and 16, 2017 the Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities hosted a conference on Religion in the Public Sphere. We brought together scholars from around the country who had at one time been associated with CSU Chico, in order to address pressing questions about the role of religion in a variety of issues that are facing North America and the world. The guest speakers were Dr. Eric Mazur (Virginia Wesleyan University), Loren Lybarger (Ohio University), Andrew Flescher (State University of New York at Stony Brook), David Bertaina (University of Illinois at Springfield), Vernon Andrews (CSU San Jose), and Derek Jeffreys (University of Wisconsin, Green Bay).

When it comes to living in society on our globe, we have to understand that we are all in it together.

The first session on Friday afternoon consisted of a round table featuring several of our guests and current faculty [The panel can be watched at this address: https://media.csuchico.edu/media/o_oagu6l3t]. Kate McCarthy, our former chair and currently Dean of Students emphasized that global and national realities have brought an immediate relevance to comparative religion that is new to most of us who research and teach in the field. This outward turn can be traced to the new situation wrought by the 9/11 attacks, when scholars were called upon to raise knowledge about Islam in order to counter the ignorance that was permeating much public discourse on the matter. There have also been in recent years a number of Supreme Court decisions about religious freedom that have drawn attention from the American public, as well as a more general shift in the majority status of white Protestants that has shaped society in a new way.

Along with these upheavals, there has also been

a growth in non-religious affiliation, known as the “nones,” that now account for almost 25% of the population.

Andrew Flescher discussed his interest in dealing with tensions between the rights of the individual and the needs of society, which raises complicated ethical questions. For example, should there be forced vaccinations, when the family does not wish for the child to be vaccinated due to religion or other beliefs, but society would benefit from the vaccination. He emphasized that when it comes to living in society on our globe, we have to understand that we are all in it together. You don’t get to choose exactly who you are “in it” with. He remarked that he learned a lot from his colleagues at Chico about the importance of listening to other viewpoints.

Vernon Andrews drew our attention to African American culture and pointed out that it is enriched by many expressive traditions adopted from the Black churches. He emphasized that in order to really understand this important part of American life we need to appreciate what African American athletes, musicians, artists, Black Lives Matter activists and others draw from this rich religious environment. Dr. Andrews also noted that he is looking at the iconic counter culture Burning Man Festival and the role of African Americans within it.

Conference (continued...)

Jason Clower then spoke about his interest in how Communism reflects many of the features of religion to a surprising degree. It has dogma, intolerance of other beliefs, a notion of paradise, sacred scriptures (the various writings of Marx, Mao and others), priestly bodies who lay down the orthodoxy and who punish unbelievers. It even has rituals of self denunciation which Dr. Clower himself had to undergo when he ran afoul of the Chinese authorities during his reporting for a CNN affiliate in Beijing. He related how he had to provide a document that revealed his "sins" of upsetting the balance of society and promised to walk the straight path from then on.

Sarah Pike talked about her quest to present common ground between marginalized and mainstream religious groups. She has recently been involved with the Committee for the Public Understanding of Religion, a committee within the American Academy of Religion that works with media, schools, military, prisons and other groups to promote religious knowledge. She talked about one project where they set up workshops for prison chaplains with the aim of teaching them about non-Christian, non-mainstream religions such as Neo-Paganism and Wicca so they could learn about the beliefs and minister to those believers more effectively.

In the first session on the morning of Saturday September 16, Dr. Andrew Flescher, who is now on the Medical Ethics Committee at Stony Brook Hospital New York, as well as Bioethics and Social Policy in the Public Health program at Stony Brook, spoke on "Isolation without Isolationism." He provocatively suggested the notion of "just peace" as an alternative to "just war" in the context of global conflicts

against stateless actors such as al Qaeda and ISIS. Having these shadowy groups as opponents makes it all the harder to know when and how to go to war. He argued that we need to rethink the ways that Christians and others have approached the justice of entering into war in light of the new kinds of weapons that we now wield. The awesome destructive power of modern weaponry changes the meaning of war and shifts the ethical framework within which these issues are discussed. He also introduced the concept of "collateral damage of peace" and explained that there will be people who die because we don't come to help them, just as there are those who die as bystanders when we do move in to try to improve the situation with force. Flescher pointed out that it is increasingly obvious that the traditional religious stance that violence only begets more violence is in fact true. Each attack on the enemy recruits more fighters to their cause. Ultimately we find a better future in a Just Peace, a non-violent but comprehensive campaign to marginalize the destructive capacities of the enemy. This begins with practical peacemaking initiatives that seek to convert environments characterized by tribal and local affiliation and bring as many people as possible into the fold.

Conference (continued...)

Loren Lybarger spoke about "*La Impunidad No Será Eterna! Catholicism and the Commemoration of the Disappeared in Argentina 40 Years after the Dictatorship.*" Here he examined the response of one community - the Church of Santa Cruz (Buenos Aires) - to the Argentine dictatorship, 1976-1983, in the context of debate over the role of the national Church and its relationship to the regime and its actions during this period. In March 1976, the Argentine military took power in a coup. In the ensuing seven years, it sought to destroy the left wing movements and groups through a campaign of extrajudicial arrest, torture, and execution. More than 30,000 individuals were disappeared and killed during this time. The presentation analyzed how religion has shaped Argentine memory of this period of state terror and described the mechanisms through which the Church of Santa Cruz undertook its commemoration of 12 individuals associated with its parish who were disappeared and executed. These processes of commemoration produced a "martyrological memory" that linked the secular political past to core Christian narratives about "the giving of blood" for the sake of justice and "the Kingdom of God." A vision of a reconciled Argentina that centered on the oppressed and the martyrs thus emerged.

Derek Jeffreys presented on the topic "Are Jails Unjust? Dignity and the American Jail," argu-

ing that a religious framework can be used to limit the assault on human dignity in American jails. He spoke about the importance of seeing dignity in each human being just by virtue of their being human, and passionately warned about the dangers of losing our humanity. He pointed out that 2.3 million people are incarcerated in the US in jails and prisons with tens of thousands in solitary confinement. What we often forget is that many of the people in jails awaiting trial have not been found guilty of any crime and often are simply too poor to post bail. Many of them also suffer from mental illnesses, and hail disproportionately from minorities. He said that not only with respect to those who end up being innocent, but even for those who turn out to be guilty, the treatment that they receive in many of our jails would sicken people of good faith if they knew about it, but most people are not aware of what is going on. He chronicled some of the harsh treatment, solitary confinement and unsanitary conditions that lead to the dehumanization of the inmates and in doing so, end up dehumanizing not just them, but also the rest of society that is complicit in this treatment. In their resistance to the rights of the incarcerated, many advocates of harsher punishments are blinded by disgust, hatred and contempt for those living in these conditions, and do not recognize their human dignity.



Conference (continued...)

In the first afternoon session, David Bertaina talked about "What Constitutes Scripture? Historical and Contemporary Reflections on Interreligious Dialogue." Here he examined the difficulties of interreligious dialogue when the understandings of the nature, meaning and uses of scripture (in this case, the Bible and the Qur'an) are different. He stated that the overlapping literary and thematic material in the Bible and Qur'an often actually exacerbates tensions. It is difficult to establish dialogue based upon shared textual worlds because minor differences can serve as points of conflict as much as points of understanding and cooperation. Bertaina used the example of the tomb of the prophets in Hebron to show how something that on the surface might seem like it can bring people of different faiths together, can actually cleave them apart. The tomb building was largely built by Christians during the period of Constantine, and then was enlarged by Muslims and is now home to separate prayer areas for Jews and Muslims, all of whom honor Abraham and his kin as forebears and prophets. However, it has been the scene of great tension and even bloodshed over the years.

Some scholars complain that scripture means such different things to different communities that interfaith dialogue is futile because the different interpretations take such fundamentally different starting positions that they can never really agree on anything. In fact, many of these strategies have been employed precisely to establish difference, to demarcate the lines be-

tween the different religions. Maybe the idea of a family of Abrahamic religions falsely gives a sense of unity amongst these groups that actually have very distinct traditions of textual interpretation which were meant to build fences between them, not bridges.

In the final session, Eric Mazur discussed popular religion in his talk entitled "The Gospel According to Luke, or How I Came to Understand Scripture from 'a long time ago and a galaxy far, far away.'" This lecture was a how-to for those investigating sacred texts, myths, and parables in popular culture, using materials drawn from "hyper-real" / "non-history based" religions such as Jediism, Matrixism, Dudeism and Pastafarianism, in comparison with more traditional texts. Dr. Mazur opened by discussing the claim that after Hip Hop artist Tupac Shakur was cremated, some of his associates rolled him into a joint and smoked him, as Shakur has suggested in a song. He then compared this to eating the communion and asked why we feel offended at one and blessed by another. The answer, of course, may be that



Conference (continued...)

one has been done for generations and is an accepted part of a major tradition, while the other is seemingly new, even though the principle is very similar. In general he showed that students can get engaged in the study of religion by linking it to their experiences in popular culture, and can gain better insight along the way.

Many ideas that are found in religions, Mazur pointed out, are also part of movies, books, music and other products of human culture, and can be fruitfully compared. He then went on to discuss the field of comparative religion more generally, citing the Hindu idea that one can climb the spiritual mountain from any side but as one approaches the summit, all the trails converge. He then warned that although the practice of serious scholarly comparison is very tricky, with many possible false moves, it

is highly necessary: if something is thought of as unique and cannot be compared to anything else, then how can we ever understand it? We can really only understand things by comparing them to other things. Meaning does not inhere in the essence of a thing, but rather, as sociologist Max Weber said “man is suspended in webs of meaning that he himself has spun.” Dr. Mazur concluded by asking whether Jediism, the religion in Star Wars, is a real religion? How is it similar to other religions that we all acknowledge? What does it mean to be a “real” religion? And why does it matter?

With this, the floor was opened up to a range of probing questions from the audience and a lively discussion ensued, emphasizing that the questions and issues brought up during the day were indeed ones that mattered to a lot of people.



SCHOLARLY WORK

Najma Yousefi published two articles in 2017: “Islam without *Fuqahā'*: Ibn al-Muqaffa' and his Perso-Islamic Solution to the Caliphate's Crisis of Political Legitimacy (70–142 AH/690–760 CE),” *Iranian Studies* 50.1 (March 2017): 9–44.

“Division and Discord among the Shi'a Ulamā': New Lights on the Failure of the 1927 Anti-Conscription Movement in Iran,” *Iranian Studies* 50.5 (September 2017): 705–33.

Sarah M. Pike's new book, *For the Wild: Ritual and Commitment in Radical Eco-Activism*, was published by the University of California Press in October 2017. (www.ucpress.edu/go/forthewild)

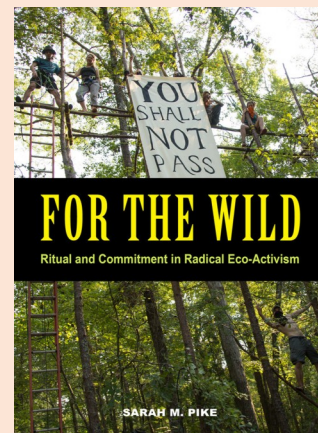
For the Wild explores the ways in which the commitments of radical environmental and animal-rights activists develop through powerful experiences with the more-than-human world during childhood and young adulthood. It addresses the question of how and why activists come to value nonhuman animals and the natural world as worthy of protection, by examining how emotions and memories of wonder, love, compassion, anger, and grief shape activists' protest practices.

Daniel Veidlinger presented a paper at the Evolution of Religion Conference in New Mexico in November titled “*Convergent Evolution of Religious Forms: The Case of Sufism and Mahayana Buddhism.*”

Sarah M. Pike presented a paper on “*Presence and Absence at the Steilneset Witchcraft Memorial*” at the American Academy of Religion 2017 Annual Meeting in Boston, MA.

Greg Cootsona has chapters in: *Connecting Faith and Science: Philosophical and Theological Inquiries*. Claremont: Claremont School of Theology Press, 2018 and *Theologians and Philosophers Using Social Media: Advice, Tips, and Testimonials*. San Diego: SacraSage Press, 2017.

Bruce Grelle participated in a panel discussion of the religious studies supplement to the C3 Framework at the annual meeting of the NCSS in San Francisco on November 18, 2017.



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