

### **Outstanding RELS Major: Michael Riser**

**Michael Riser** came to Chico State in 2017 after studying and working in his home state of Texas for many years. A double major in Comparative Religion and Asian Studies with a Japanese minor, Michael has displayed an unflagging work ethic, a bottomless hunger for intellectual adventure, and has served as a College of HFA Student Ambassador. He studied Japanese at a direct exchange to Shinshu University in Matsumoto, Japan during 2018-2019 and studied at a Buddhist temple in Ningbo, China over the summer of 2017. Michael has truly risen to the demands that we have made on him and prepared excellent papers, presentations, and tests that demonstrate he has learned a tremendous amount about the religions of the world. He is an open-minded and adventurous thinker who is not afraid to ask big questions and is eager to do the deep research needed to answer them responsibly. He is able to bring together knowledge from a variety of domains both within and outside of comparative religion to provide context and insight into the issues that we deal with in this program. He would love to continue working (and possibly studying) at CSU Chico, and is considering future study of Buddhism, language, or library science.

### **Outstanding HUMN Major: Yuliana Calvillo Solis**

**Yuliana Calvillo Solis**, who is representing the College as an HFA Student Ambassador, joined us at Chico State in 2015 to double major in Humanities and French, with a double minor in European Studies and Middle Eastern Studies. Yuliana is an intrepid Humanist and a delightful and sparkling presence in all her classes and many activities at Chico State. Following her first year, Yuliana traveled to France for a year of study at the CSU's IP campus in Aix-en-Provence. Nevertheless, she soon realized that one year was not enough. She remedied this intolerable situation by taking the exceptional step of applying to spend an additional year studying abroad in Paris. She returned wearing only black clothing, of course. Recently she has been teaching herself medieval French and Spanish (and has completed three semesters of Arabic language as well!). Yuliana's Honors Thesis in Humanities centers on the representation of Muslims in the two foundational epic poems of medieval France and Spain, *La Chanson de Roland* and *El Cantar del Mio Cid*. Yuliana hopes to one day earn a PhD, and wishes to use her knowledge of English, Spanish, and French to work with refugees and immigrants around the world.

### **Outstanding Online RELS Major: Terrence Bell**

**Terrence Bell** joined the Religious Studies program at Chico State in 2018. Terrence resides in Sacramento, California, where he currently works full-time for a California law enforcement agency. As a first-generation college student, scholarship in RELS has not only provided Mr. Bell the opportunity to acquire an enriched understanding of social and cultural experiences, but has also been instrumental in fostering the knowledge, skills, and abilities conducive to engage in the rigors of education with passion and confidence. Terrence is an online student who has shone from day one. He always writes extremely insightful comments on the lectures and goes through them so carefully that we can use his notes to remind us what we said. His papers are invariably well written and well researched, displaying all the skills we would like to see in a budding scholar of religion: they are theoretically sophisticated, carefully argued and show an impressive sensitivity to the complex valences that are at play in the religions of the world. He is a model online student. Upon graduation, Terrence plans to matriculate at a local law school and study public law.

**CORH Outstanding Leadership Award: Angela Stieber**

**Angela Stieber** is a graduating senior majoring in Religious Studies. She has served as both Student Ambassador for Religious Studies in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and an officer in the Comparative Religion and Humanities Society since Fall 2018, this past year as club president. Angela has been a delightful participant in our hybrid classes, inspiring students around her. More than any student in the Department's recent memory, Angela has emerged as an outstanding leader who has embraced her role not only as a Religious Studies scholar but also as an advocate for the program and the academic discipline. In addition to serving as a Student Ambassador, Angela has helped the Department with new initiatives aimed at promoting the Religious Studies Online Degree Completion program; including a great new marketing video that we know will generate increased interest in the program. Angela has shown extraordinary determination and resilience in her journey to the degree, which she is completing this spring before heading on to graduate work in the excellent master's program in religion at Rice University in Houston, Texas.