

10-2012

Good News: [A Newsletter] from the Department of Theology and Religious Studies of Saint Joseph's University, Fall 2012

Saint Joseph's University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarship.sju.edu/trl_news

Citation

Saint Joseph's University, "Good News: [A Newsletter] from the Department of Theology and Religious Studies of Saint Joseph's University, Fall 2012" (2012). *Theology & Religious Studies Newsletters*. 2.
http://scholarship.sju.edu/trl_news/2

This Magazines and Newsletters is brought to you for free and open access by the Theology & Religious Studies Department at Scholarship@SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theology & Religious Studies Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@SJU. For more information, please contact kmudrick@sju.edu.

**SAINT JOSEPH'S
UNIVERSITY**

**Department of
Theology & Religious Studies**

Chair: Dr. Shawn Krahrmer, BE209
Admin Ass't: Ms. Joni Porreca, BE218

Phone: 610-660-1850
Fax: 610-660-3217
E-mail: porreca@sju.edu

**VISIT US AT:
WWW.SJU.EDU/
ACADEMICS/CAS/
THEOLOGY**

Meet Our Faculty:

Gerald J. Beyer
Associate Professor, Social Ethics

James F. Caccamo
Associate Professor, Social Ethics

David Carpenter
Associate Professor, History of Religions

Peter Clark, S.J.
Professor, Ethics
Director, Institute of Catholic Bioethics

Philip A. Cunningham
Professor, Catholic-Jewish Relations
Director, Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations

Millicent Feske
Assistant Professor, Systematics
Program Director, M.A. in Theology and Society

Vincent Genovesi, S.J.
Professor, Ethics

Gerard Jacobitz
Assistant Professor, Systematics

Allen Kerkeslager
Associate Professor, Religions of the Ancient World

Shawn Madison Krahrmer
Associate Professor, Historical Theology
Chair

Kathleen Oxx
Assistant Professor, Catholicism in America

Bruce Wells
Associate Professor, Hebrew Bible

Umeyye Isra Yazicioglu
Assistant Professor, Islam

Faculty Presentations and Activities (continued from p. 3)

"Christ Jesus & the Jewish People Today," response to R. Alan Brill, Rabbi Hayim Perelmuter annual conference, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Mar 19, 2012.

Organizer: "Promise, Land, and Hope: Jews & Christians Seeking Understanding for Constructive Dialogue about Israeli-Palestinian Issues," Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, Aug 7-9, 2012.

Shawn Krahrmer

Participated in Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities conference for Pastoral, Theological and Ministerial Education at Loyola University Maryland, April 12-14, 2012

Participated in Biennial Meeting of the AJCU Chairs of Theology & Religious Studies Departments at Regis University, Denver, CO., March 15-17, 2012

Faculty Publications (continued from p. 2)

"Medical Marijuana: Medical Necessity versus Political Agenda" (with Kevin Capuzzi, Cameron Fick), *Medical Science Monitor*, Dec. 2011, based on Fick's SJU summer scholars project.

(Co-author) "Undocumented Patients: What is required when the line between emergency and chronic care blurs?" *Hastings Center Report*, Jan-Feb 2011.

Philip A. Cunningham

"A Tectonic Shift in Relations with Non-Catholics: Witnessing a Transformation," in W. Madges & M. Daley, eds., *Vatican II: Fifty Personal Stories* (Orbis, 2012), 183-187.

"Discerning the Stumbling Block" *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (2012).

"Paul's Letters and the Relationship between the People of Israel and the Church Today," in R. Beiringer and D. Pollefeyt, eds.,

Katie Oxx

"Catholic Spatiality in Colonial and Early National Philadelphia," *American Academy of Religion*, Nov 2011.

Presented on the spatial religious history of Philadelphia to NEH institute on spatial narratives hosted by the Polis Center at Indiana U.-Purdue U. of Indiana.

Bruce Wells

Participated in work session: the *Cambridge Comparative History of Ancient Law*; lead author of chapter "Law and Religion," July 2012 in Cambridge, UK

"Guilt and Liability in the Bible's Priestly Texts and the Eanna Temple Archive" and "Review of S. Greengus, *Laws from the Bible and in Early Rabbinic Collections: The Legal Legacy of the*

Ancient Near East," *Society of Biblical Literature in Amsterdam*, July 23-26, 2012.

"Bureaucratic Guilt under King and under God," at conference "Administration, Law, and Administrative Law," *Austrian Academy of the Sciences*, Vienna, Nov 24-26, 2011.

"The Whole Truth: Forensic Rituals and Forensic Evidence in Ancient Near Eastern Courtrooms." *Brigham Young University*, Provo, Utah, June 1, 2011.

"The Source of the Ten Commandments and Other Laws in the Bible," *Doylestown Presbyterian Colloquium*, Doylestown, PA, Sept 20, 2011.

Katie Oxx

"More Than 'A Very Small Morsel'" (Review of C. Cadorette, *Catholicism in Social and Historical Context: An Introduction*) *H-Catholic, H-Net Reviews*. Nov, 2011.

Bruce Wells

"Birthright: Ancient Near East" and "Birthright: Hebrew Bible" in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (de Gruyter, 2012: 57-61)

"The Assertory Oath in Neo-Babylonian and Persian Administrative Texts" (with F. Rachel Magdalene and Cornelia Wunsch), *Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité* 57: 13-29.

Wells, B. "The Quasi-Alien in Leviticus 25" in R. Achenbach, R. Albertz, and J. Wöhrle, eds., *The Foreigner and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, 135-155.

Millicent C. Feske

"Rachel's Lament: The Impact of Infertility & Pregnancy Loss Upon the Religious Faith of Ordinary Christians," *Journal of Pastoral Theology*, 22/1 (2012): 3.1-3.17



Saint Joseph's University

Good News

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

FALL 2012

University Approves Department Proposal for M.A. in Theology & Society

After a unanimous positive vote from the University Council last spring, acting president John Smithson gave formal approval to the Department's proposal for a Master of Arts program in Theology and Society.

The implementation of the program will proceed gradually under the guidance of program director, Dr. Millicent C. Feske.

The 36-credit program will enable students to study a range of theological

disciplines, while also engaging in conversation with the questions and needs of American and global society. This interaction between Catholic and other Christian traditions, on the one hand, and contemporary culture, on the other, will inform both professional and volunteer work in church, school, service, or marketplace contexts.

The program puts "Faith and Culture in Critical Conversation" with one another.

Courses in ethics, biblical studies, systematic theology, historical theology, and interreligious relations are designed to interrelate and to offer a dynamic dialogue with the challenges of our world.

As Dr. Feske explains, "The Master's degree in Theology and Society is designed for men and women in professional and volunteer ministries and for those who wish to study theology more deeply and at

an advanced level. The mission of the University is about the relationship between intellect and justice and that is at the core of this program."

For more information, see the program's website: <http://www.sju.edu/majors-programs/graduate-arts-sciences/masters/theology-and-society>



From the Chair

Dr. Shawn Krahrmer



We were on a Greek island, our context a particularly tantalizing distraction for my 13 students. But I had reached my limit of tolerance by the end of the third three hour session for which they had arrived completely unprepared for class. It is extraordinarily difficult to be the only energy source in a room for three hours. Even more difficult to hold a dialogue with one's self.

At first I got depressed. Then I got angry. Then I received an e-mail which reminded me that mentally "skipping out and not tuning in is a symptom of soul-loss... call forth their soul vs. their morality, it might do some good."

Given my upbringing, I'm much better at moralizing, at inveighing against laziness, screwed up priorities, and egotistical self-centeredness. I am better at complaining about how today's students are spoiled,

about their inexplicable sense of entitlement. I do better with "should's and 'ought's, rewards and punishments, than with recalling students to soul, to mindfulness of their deep and better selves, or in Thomas Merton's language, their true selves.

How do I encourage students who aren't even certain God exists to reach deep into themselves for the really real? How do I move them beyond the surface values of "the world" that at their age tend to focus upon fitting in, often through heavy drinking?

At the practical level, I sought to appeal to their baser instincts: "If you come unprepared for class tomorrow night, we will sit there and read for three hours, and I will schedule another class while we are on Crete." Sometimes base appeals work.

With respect to calling forth "soul," I started with some of the themes in our class. I had used Sandra Schneider's definition of spirituality: "Spirituality is

the act of conscious involvement in the project of life integration through self-transcendence towards the ultimate value one perceives." What is the ultimate value which currently drives your thinking and doing, around which you integrate your life? They didn't understand the question! We spent 30 minutes or more wrestling together with what our life values might be - love, truth, happiness. They reminded me they were only 21. I reminded them that persons in the Middle Ages would have been married by age 15 and have lived half their life expectancy by age 21.

Each class thereafter, we returned to the question in one way or another. You are not the center of the universe. So what idea or value or goal outside yourself are you directing your life towards? Another variant: The monks and nuns whom we have studied all gave up power, prestige, and normal social relations to gain something they considered more important.

Is there an idea, a value, a person, an object "out there" that is or could become so important to you that you would make sacrifices in order to obtain it?

Or: looking at your own life, what repulses you? What attracts you? What is the deep truth in what attracts you? Identify all the places you find this in your life. How could you increase the presence of this attraction in your life?

I've given students the option of writing a 7-10 page paper on one of several questions like this, or of doing a traditional academic course summary paper in which our themes are drawn together with a thesis. I bet that all of my students will accept the former option. Although I'm still a neophyte when it comes to "calling forth soul," I'm becoming more and more convinced that this is a task worth taking up. And I've found that even when students don't know how to answer these questions, they appreciate being asked to think about them.

Faculty Publications

Gerald J. Beyer

"What Paul Ryan Missed: What Catholic Social Teaching says about Solidarity and Subsidiarity," *America*, June 4, 2012.

"Solidarity and Occupy Wall Street: A Tale of Two Movements," *Political Theology* 13/1 (2012): 5-13.

"Admission Impossible: Preferential Option for the Poor at Catholic Colleges" *U.S. Catholic* 77/2 (February 2012): 32-35.

[In Polish:] "Open the doors to all ... Solidarity with the poor, the right to education and Catholic universities in the U.S. and Polish society," trans. D. Chabrajska, *Ethos* 24/4 (2011): 133-167.

"Economic Rights: Past, Present and Future" in T. Cushman, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Human Rights* (Routledge, 2011): 291-310.

New Honor Society Members Inducted

On Apr. 18 2012, the Department inducted new members into the Alpha Xi chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa, the Nat'l Honor Society for Religious Studies-Theology. (L to r:) Dr. Shawn Kraemer, Juliette D'Ambrosio, Hannah Abrams, Matthew Bender, Dr. Gerard Jacobitz.

"Strange Bedfellows: Religious Liberty & Neoliberalism," *National Catholic Reporter*, Feb 15, 2012 (also in Polish & Portuguese).

"Catholic Politicians' Capital Punishment Conundrum," *National Catholic Reporter*, Special Pro-Life Ed., Jan 6-19, 2012: 16-17.

"A Catholic Call to Abolish the Death Penalty" (co-author), *Catholic Moral Theology*, Oct 10, 2011. A statement signed by 395 Catholic scholars and printed in many major news outlets.

Peter Clark, S.J.

(Co-author:) "Surgical Vaccine: Should Male Circumcision Be Mandatory in Sub-Saharan Africa?" *Ethics Research Compendium*, Peter M. Roberts & Emily O. Perez, eds. (Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2012).

"Ethics Training for Medical Interns/Residents in the Mercy Health System," *Health Progress* 93 (3) May-June 2012.

(Co-author): "Slow-Sand Water Filter: Design, Implementation, Accessibility & Sustainability in Developing Countries," *Medical Science Monitor* 18/7 July 2012.

Death With Dignity: Ethical and Practical Considerations of the Terminally Ill, Univ. of Scranton/Univ. of Chicago Press.

"Heroin Addiction: An Ethical Analysis of New York City's Heroin Manual," *Journal of Health* 12/1.

continued on back page >



Bioethics Institute Develops Sustainable Water Filter

The World Health Organization estimates that 1.1 billion people worldwide lack access to a safe and adequate water supply. To help address this public health crisis, a team of students, faculty and fellows associated with SJU's Institute of Catholic Bioethics has developed an inexpensive and sustainable slow-sand water filter for use by less-developed nations.

Bioethicist Peter Clark, S.J., professor of theology and health

services and director of the Institute says he expects the filters to be available for use in September. "Everyone on the planet deserves access to clean water – it is a basic human right," says Fr. Clark. "We are thrilled that this project has come to fruition, and that the filters will very shortly be contributing to a better quality of life for individuals living in vulnerable communities."



Department Welcomes Dr. Susan Andrews

The newest addition to the Department's faculty is Dr. Susan Andrews, a specialist in Chinese religions. She has recently completed her PhD at Columbia University in New York, and will join us in January 2013.

Dr. Andrews holds Masters degrees from both McMaster University and from Columbia, and has taught at the University of San Francisco and at Mount Allison University.

As an expert in pre-modern Chinese religions, her research focuses on East Asian sacred place and pilgrimage traditions, interactions between cults dedicated to local deities and those

devoted to bodhisattvas, and the relationship between hagiography and landscape.

These subjects converge in the question: How do stories of a religious figure's life and connection to a place contribute to the sense that a site is sacred and merits devotion?

In addition to research in China, Dr. Andrews is also knowledgeable in the area of Japanese Religions, having been a Research Fellow at the Institute for Comprehensive Buddhist Studies at Taisho University in Tokyo, Japan in 2005-2006 and has taught courses in Japanese Religions.

Dr. Andrews proposed courses for Spring 2013 sound intriguing:

"Food Practices and Chinese Religions" and "Death and the Afterlife in Chinese Religions." She is also developing a course to be taught during the summer of 2013, as part of Saint Joseph's China Summer Program. This course, will take students to Mount Wutai in China, will be called "Superhumans in Chinese Religions."

Welcome aboard, Dr. Andrews!



Faculty Presentations and Activities

Gerald J. Beyer

"The Catholic Church and the Ethic of Solidarity in Poland after 1989," The 70th Annual Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America Conference, Boston, MA, Sept. 8, 2012.

"The Occupy Movement and Catholic Social Teaching," Saint Joseph's University, Mar 21, 2012

"Workers' Rights and Socially Responsible Investing in the Catholic Tradition: A Case Study," Catholic Social Teaching and Human Rights Conference, Villanova University, Mar 19-20, 2012

"Is Solidarity Contrary to Human Nature? Insights from Evolutionary Biology," Krakow University of Economics, Krakow, Poland, November 26, 2011

"Can Poland's Solidarity be Globalized? Insights from Evolutionary Biology," International Conference "Ethical Pluralism and Solidarity," Prague Metropolitan University, Prague, Czech Republic, April 26, 2011

James F. Caccamo

"Mediating God in a New Media World," Annual Meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America, June 8, 2012.

Participant: "Theology and Communications: in Dialogue," an international consultation co-sponsored by Pontifical Council on Social Communications and US Conf. of Catholic Bishops.

"Rewiring Virtue," Contemporary Issues in Catholicism, LeMoyne Univ., Syracuse, NY. Mar 20, 2012.

"Mediating God in a New Media World" (technology and liturgy) Annual Meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America, St. Louis, MO, June 8, 2012.

Peter Clark, S.J.

"Advance Directives, Living Wills, Durable Powers of Attorney and DNR Orders," Villa St. Joseph's Nursing Home, Flourtown, PA, Aug 23, 2011.

"Ethical Principles for Moral Decision Making" and "Advance Directives, Living Wills, and Do Not Resuscitate Orders: Medical, Legal and Ethical Perspectives," Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dec 13, 2011.

"Ethical Decision Making in Pediatrics," St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, Philadelphia, Jan 23, 2012.

"Moral Principles as the Basis of Ethical Decision-Making," Shriner's Hospital for Children, Philadelphia, Feb 9, 2012.

Philip A. Cunningham

"The Life Cycle and Dynamics of Interreligious Dialogue Groups," St. Benedict's Church, Mohnton, PA, July 19, 2011.

"Approaches to the Bible" and "A Theology of the Land," International Council of Christians and Jews, Palestinian Christians, and representatives of Swedish, German, Dutch Protestant churches, Beit Jala, Palestinian Authority, Oct 27-28, 2011.

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies is committed to a rigorous presentation of the methods and content of both the scholarly study of Christian Theology and the academic discipline of Religious Studies. We view these combined disciplines as an important component within the liberal arts curriculum of a Roman Catholic university in the Jesuit tradition. We therefore take seriously our charge to engage students in the serious and critical study of religious experience, practice, thought and inquiry, both historically and in the contemporary world.

DEPARTMENTAL

MINOR AWARDED

MASTER'S DEGREE

SCHOLARSHIPS

JoAnn Lopez, a 2012 graduate with a minor in Theology and Religious Studies, has been awarded full scholarships (plus stipends) to Master degree programs in theological studies at Boston College and Notre Dame University as a top candidate. JoAnn writes: "Thank you (and all the Department of Theology and Religious Studies faculty and staff) for the very important role you had in my theological development. I really was very fortunate to attend a university with excellent professors who care deeply about their students and about faith-justice. Professors like you have motivated me to pursue a vocation in higher education."

CONGRATULATIONS, JOANN!

continued on back page >