

BRIAN HAGEN COLLINS Ph.D.
History of Religions

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EDUCATION

- August 2010 Ph.D. History of Religions, The Divinity School, University of Chicago
- June 2003 M.A. History of Religions, The Divinity School, University of Chicago
- August 2001 B.A. Religious Studies, North Carolina State University (Honors) *Magna Cum Laude*
- June 2001 B.A Psychology, North Carolina State University (Honors) *Magna Cum Laude*

Academic Specialization:

Hinduism
Buddhism
Comparative religion
Theories of religion
Religion and continental philosophy
Religion and popular culture

Dissertation:

"Headless Mothers, Magic Cows, and Lakes of Blood: The Paraśurāma Cycle in the *Mahābhārata* and Beyond."

This dissertation analyzes stories of the Indian epic hero Paraśurāma in terms of four major motifs: mixed birth, matricide, cattle theft and mass killing. Using theoretical models suggested by psychoanalysts Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, and André Green, anthropological philosopher René Girard, and political theorists Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben, it examines the changing significance of the myth and explores what it says about the connections between ritual, revenge, and desire.

Readers: Wendy Doniger (University of Chicago), David Shulman (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Alf Hiltebeitel (George Washington University)

Exams:

Classic Theories of Religion, Martin Riesebrodt

Contemporary Theories of Religion, Matthew Kapstein
Buddhism, Steven Collins
Hinduism, Wendy Doniger

TEACHING

Areas of Competence:

Hinduism
Buddhism
Asian religions
Comparative Religion
Classic theories of religion
Contemporary theories of religion

Experience:

Fall 2011 Teaching Assistant Professor, Religious Traditions of the World, North Carolina State University.

Fall 2011 Teaching Assistant Professor, The Hindu Traditions, North Carolina State University.

Spring 2011 Teaching Assistant Professor, Introduction to the Study of Religion, North Carolina State University.

Spring 2011 Teaching Assistant Professor, Religious Traditions of the World, North Carolina State University.

Spring 2011 Teaching Assistant Professor, Religion in American History, North Carolina State University.

Fall 2007 Instructor, Introduction to Hinduism, Loyola University, Chicago.

Fall 2006 Instructor, Introduction to Hinduism, Loyola University, Chicago.

Spring 2006 Instructor, Introduction to Hinduism, Loyola University, Chicago.

Fall 2005 Instructor, Introduction to Hinduism, Loyola University, Chicago.

Spring 2005 Instructor, Introduction to Hinduism, Loyola University, Chicago.

Fall 2004 Instructor, Introduction to Hinduism, Loyola University, Chicago.

Summer 2004 Instructor, The Hindu Traditions, St. Xavier University, Chicago.

Spring 2004 Instructor, Introduction to Hinduism, Loyola University, Chicago.

Guest Lectures:

Spring 2010 Guest lecture, "Sin and *Saw*: Morality, Modernity and Malaise in a Contemporary American Horror Film," in Jeremy Biles' Religion and the Arts course at DePaul University, Chicago.

Winter 2010 Guest lecturer for week two of Wendy Doniger's *Mahābhārata* in Translation course at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

PUBLICATIONS

Books and Monographs:

In Progress *Yajñānta, The End of Sacrifice: Mimetic Theory and the Study of Hindu Myth*, monograph commissioned by Imitatio, to be published by Michigan State University Press.

Journal Articles:

In Progress "Burning Desires: War, Sacrifice, and Delusion in Ancient India." To be published in *Contagion*.

In Progress "Lying down with Vrātyas, Getting up with Fleas." For *The Journal of Hindu Studies* as part of the proceedings of the 2010 Society for Tantric Studies conference.

Fall 2011 With Jeremy Biles. "Karr's Kill Cult: Virtual Cults and Pseudo-Killing in the Digital Age." Accepted for publication in *NANO: New American Notes Online 1.3 Aggressive Art*.

Book Reviews:

In Progress *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities: Sustenance and Sustainability* by Pankaj Jain for *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.

In Progress *Strong Arms and Drinking Strength: Masculinity, Violence, and the Body in Ancient India* by Jarrod L. Whitaker for *History of Religions*.

Spring 2011 *The Inordinately Strange Life of Dyce Sombre, Victorian Anglo-Indian and Chancery "Lunatic"* by Michael H. Fisher. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70:1 (May 2011).

Winter 2004 *Encountering Kālī in the Margins, at the Center, in the West for South Asia Newsletter*, University of Chicago.

Encyclopedia Articles:

Fall 2011 "Rāma Jamadagnya/Paraśurāma" entry in *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Hinduism*.

Winter 2011 "The Rig Veda" and "The Jain Sutras" in *Milestone Documents of World Religions*.

Winter 2008 "Indian Mythology" in *Essential Visual History of World Mythology*, Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008.

Winter 2007 A series of articles on Hinduism for *Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia*.

Solicited Online Publications:

Fall 2011 "After the Earthquake: Reflections on Religion in the Anthropocene." Published on the blog *Occasional Religion*, 8/24/11.

Spring 2011 "God is Dead but Sacrifice (and Cricket) Lives on in India." Published on the blog *Occasional Religion*, 4/25/11.

Winter 2011 "Blood Money in Pakistan." Published on the blog *Occasional Religion*, 3/8/11.

Winter 2010 "*Our Savage God* Revisited: The Face of Manson." Published in the online journal *Sightings*, 1/7/10.

Spring 2009 "*The Last House on the Left* and Its Antecedents: The Long Strange Journey of a Myth Motif." Published in the online journal *Sightings*, 4/12/09.

Summer 2008 "Jesus Is Just All Right." Published in the online journal *Sightings* 6/12/08.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Forthcoming "The Sacrificial Ram and the Swan Queen: The Surrogate Victim Mechanism and Mimetic Rivalry in *The Wrestler* and *Black Swan*." To be delivered at the 2011 American Academy of Religion conference in San Francisco.

- Fall 2011 "Situating the Situation: Psychogeography, Mimetic Desire and the Resurgent Indo-European Trifunctional Paradigm in Seaside." To be delivered at the UChicago Conference on *Jersey Shore* Studies, October 28, 2011.
- Spring 2011 "Burning Desires: War, Sacrifice, and Delusion in Ancient India." Delivered at the Symposium on René Girard and World Religions at The Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, April 14-16.
- Spring 2011 "Taking Things out of Context: Down the Post-Colonial Rabbit Hole with Alain Badiou, St. Paul and Wendy Doniger." Delivered at Postmodernism, Culture and Religion 4: The Future of Continental Philosophy of Religion, Syracuse University, April 7-9.
- Fall 2010 "Lying Down with Dogs: The Canine Element in Tantra." Delivered at the Society for Tantric Studies conference in Flagstaff, Arizona.
- Fall 2010 "Unmasking the Sovereign Sadist: Robert Eisler's *Man into Wolf*." Delivered at the American Academy of Religion conference in Atlanta.
- Fall 2010 Panel proposal "Non-canonical Scholarship in the Study of Religion," with Jeffrey J. Kripal (Rice University), Jason Bivins (North Carolina State University), Hugh Urban (Ohio State University), and Paul C. Johnson (University of Michigan). Delivered at the American Academy of Religion conference in Atlanta.
- Fall 2010 "*Āpaddharma* as a State of Exception; or, Paraśurāma the Werewolf." Delivered as part of the "New Directions in the Study of Religion in South Asia" papers panel at the American Academy of Religion conference in Atlanta.
- Winter 2010 Invited guest at Imitatio Gathering at Stanford University with René Girard, Robert Hamerton-Kelly (Stanford University, McCormick Theological Seminary), and Jean-Pierre Dupuy (Stanford University, Ecole Polytechnique).
- Fall 2009 "Barking up the Wrong Tree: Arboreal Themes in the Paraśurāma-Reṅukā Myth Cycle." Delivered at American Academy of Religion conference in Montreal.
- Fall 2009 Panel proposal, "Trees, Procreation and Conflict in Myth and Theology," with Patrizia Granziera (University of Morelos, Mexico), Meg Withgott (Harvard Divinity School), and Bruce Sullivan (Northern Arizona University). Delivered at American Academy of Religion conference in Montreal.

Spring 2009 "Kill 'Em All. Let God Sort 'Em Out: Feuding, Sacrifice, and Varṣicide in the Mythology of Paraśurāma." Delivered at American Academy of Religion Midwest Regional Conference in Chicago.

SERVICE PRESENTATIONS

Fall 2011 Guest Speaker at NCSU Anthropology Club.

Fall 2011 Faculty Discussion Leader, incoming freshmen student discussion groups of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot.

Spring 2011 Moderator, Interfaith Forum at Raleigh Charter High School with Rabbi Eric Soloman, Mehdi Hazari, Mark Schell and Mehran Ghofrani.

GRANTS

2007-2008 Martin Marty Center Fellowship

Winter 2007 COSAS Dissertation-writing grant for fieldwork in India

Spring 2005 Wabash Teaching Fellowship

2004-2005 FLAS grant (Hindi)

Summer 2003 COSAS Summer language study grant (Sanskrit)

2002-2003 FLAS grant (Hindi)

2001-2002 Divinity school scholarship, full tuition plus \$3000 stipend

LANGUAGES

French—Reading
German—Reading
Hindi—Reading, writing and speaking
Pali—Reading
Sanskrit—Reading

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Religion
Association for Asian Studies

OTHER ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

- Summer 2007 Research Assistant to Prof. Wendy Doniger
- Summer 2006 Research Assistant to Prof. Wendy Doniger.
- Fall 2005 Teaching Assistant, *Hinduism: A Chronicle*, University of Chicago and Research Assistant to Prof. Wendy Doniger.
- July 2005 Content Editor, *Rulers of Ancient India*: Newbridge Educational Publishing.
- Winter 2004 Teaching Assistant for Wendy Doniger's *Mahābhārata*.
- 2001-2002 Area assistant, South Asian reading room, Regenstein library, University of Chicago.
- 1999-2001 Research Assistant to Prof. Tony Stewart, North Carolina State University.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- 2003-2004 Music director, WHPK-FM. Updated music catalogue, acquired new music, corresponded with College Music Journal.
- 2002-2003 Rock Format Chief, WHPK-FM. Hired new disc jockeys, made disc jockeys' schedules, managed day-to-day operations of rock format, dealt with disciplinary cases.
- 2000-2001 President and Founder, "The Academic Study of Religions Club," North Carolina State University. Organized monthly lectures from scholars of religion from around the country.

REFERENCES

Jason Bivins
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Wendy Doniger
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Comparative Religion
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
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