

Brian Hagen Collins
PhD Candidate
History of Religions

Current Contact Information

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Education

- Winter 2009 PhD. History of Religions, The Divinity School, University of Chicago
(expected)
- 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

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 Parashurama 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 Andre Green, literary critic and theologian Rene Girard, and legal historian and medievalist William Ian Miller, I examine the changing significance of the myth for Indian religious traditions and explore what the myth tells us about the connections between ritual, revenge, and desire.

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

Exams Classic Theories of Religion, Martin Riesebrodt
Contemporary Theories of Religion, Matthew Kapstein
Buddhism, Steve Collins
Hinduism, Wendy Doniger

Research, Academic and Administrative Positions

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

Summer 2007 Assistant to Prof. Wendy Doniger

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

Summer 2006 Assistant to Prof. Wendy Doniger

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

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

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 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.

Winter 2004 Teaching Assistant for Wendy Doniger's *Mahabharata*.

2003-2004 Music director, WHPK-FM. Update music catalogue, acquire new music,
correspond with College Music Journal.

2002-2003 Rock Format Chief, WHPK-FM. Hire new disc jockeys, make disc
jockeys' schedules, managed day to day operations of rock format, dealt
with disciplinary cases.

2001-2002 Area assistant, South Asian reading room, Regenstein library, University
of Chicago. Made new catalogue entries for previously unlisted gift books
from South Asia.

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.

1999-2001 Research Assistant to Prof. Tony Stewart, North Carolina State University.
Helped to copy edit *Caitanya-caritamrta*, *Harvard Oriental Series no. 56*,

assisted with functions organized by the Triangle South Asia Consortium, updated Consortium files.

Publications and Presentations

- Fall 2009 "Barking up the Wrong Tree: Arboreal Themes in the Parashurama-Renuka Myth Cycle." To be delivered at 2009 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). To be delivered at 2009 American Academy of Religion conference in Montreal.
- 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.
- Spring 2009 "Kill 'Em All. Let God Sort 'Em Out: Feuding, Sacrifice, and Varnicide in the Mythology of Parashurama." Delivered at 2009 American Academy of Religion Midwest Regional Conference in Chicago.
- Winter 2008 "Indian Mythology" in *Essential Visual History of World Mythology*, Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008.
- Summer 2008 "Jesus Is Just All Right." Published in the online journal Sightings 6/12/08.
- Winter 2007 A series of articles on Hinduism for *Benet's Readers Encyclopedia*.
- Winter 2004 Book review of *Encountering Kali in the Margins, at the Center, in the West* for *South Asia Newsletter*, University of Chicago.

Grants

- 2007-2008 Martin Marty Center Fellowship
- Winter 2007 COSAS Dissertation-writing grant for fieldwork in India
- Spring 2006 Dissertation-writing travel grant
- 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

Hindi. Reading, writing and speaking.

Sanskrit. Reading

French. Reading.

German. Reading.

Pali. Reading.

Areas of Interest

South Asian history.

Hinduism.

Buddhism.

Classic theories of religion.

Contemporary theories of religion.

Comparative mythology.