

# History of Religions

## Faculty

**Wendy Doniger**, Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions; also in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations and Committee on Social Thought (MA, PhD, Harvard University; DPhil, Oxford University)

**Matthew Kapstein**, Numata Visiting Professor of the Philosophy of Religions and the History of Religions (PhD, Brown University)

**Bruce Lincoln**, Caroline E. Haskell Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions; also in the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and Committee on Medieval Studies; Associate Faculty in the Departments of Anthropology and Classics (PhD, University of Chicago)

**James T. Robinson**, Professor of the History of Judaism; also in History of Religions, Islamic Studies, The Program on Medieval Studies, Religious Studies, Fundamentals: Texts and Issues, and the Center for Jewish Studies. (MPhil, Oxford University; MA, PhD, Harvard University)

**Christian K. Wedemeyer**, Associate Professor of the History of Religions (MA, MPhil, PhD, Columbia University)

## Associated Faculty

**Steven Collins**, Chester D. Tripp Professor in the Humanities, and Professor of South Asian Languages and Civilizations (DPhil, Oxford University)

**Paul Copp**, Associate Professor in Chinese Religion and Thought, and East Asian Languages and Civilizations (PhD, Princeton University)

**Christopher Faraone**, Frank Curtis Springer and Gertrude Melcher Springer Professor in the Humanities, and Professor in the Department of Classics (PhD, Stanford University)

**James Ketelaar**, Professor in History and East Asian Languages and Civilizations (PhD, University of Chicago)

For more information, contact

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Dean of Students

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 UChicago Divinity School



The History of Religions area approaches religion as an exclusively human phenomenon, via the methods of the social sciences and the humanities. It is concerned to theorize at a high level of generalization, informed by broadly comparative and empirical research, and to carry out high-level empirical research informed by theoretical reflection. It pays self-conscious and explicit attention to problems of epistemology, terminology, category formation, method, and motive. Irreverent by temperament and sometimes on principle, it insists that the Western monotheisms should not be the only paradigms and/or objects of legitimate study; religion cannot be reduced to belief, but also includes issues of practices, institutions, communities, habitus, and other factors that often operate below the level of consciousness; and interpretation involves critical probing and systematic interrogation of the idealized self-representations of any religious phenomenon.

Those who work within the History of Religions are expected to become thoroughly acquainted with the development of the History of Religions as an academic discipline, and to have a sophisticated understanding of the theories and methods that are relevant to contemporary research in the field. Each student must deal creatively with the tension that results from an emphasis on the importance of historically contextualized studies on the one hand, and of wide-ranging theoretical and comparative research on the other.

## Recent Graduates

### Alexander Rocklin, PhD 2014

"Religion under Contract: The Regulation of Religion and the Making of Hinduism in Colonial Trinidad"  
Visiting Assistant Professor, Willamette University

### Anne Mocko, PhD 2012

"Demoting Vishnu: Ritual, Politics, and the Unmaking of Nepal's Monarchy"  
Assistant Professor of Religion, Concordia College (Moorhead, MN)

### Blake Wentworth, PhD 2011

"Yearning for a Dreamed Real: The Procession of the Lord in the Tamil Ulas"  
Assistant Professor of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley

### Brian Collins, PhD 2010

"Headless Mothers, Magic Cows, and Lakes of Blood: The Parashurama Cycle in the 'Mahabharata' and Beyond"  
Drs. Ram and Sushila Gawande Chair in Indian Religion and Philosophy, Ohio University

### Amanda J. Lucia (Huffer), PhD 2010

"Darshan in a Hotel Ballroom: Amritanandamayi Ma's (Amma's) Communities of Devotees in the United States"  
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, University of California at Riverside

### Elizabeth Pérez, PhD 2010

"Narrative, Seasoning, Song: Praxis, Subjectivity, and Transformation in an African-American Lucumi Community"  
Assistant Professor of Religion, Dartmouth College

## Graduate Workshops

The Council on Advanced Studies (CAS) sponsors interdisciplinary graduate research workshops in the humanities, social sciences, and divinity, designed to bring together faculty and graduate students from the University of Chicago and the wider Chicago area to create scholarly dialogue, to encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration, and to foster the exchange of ideas. Workshops include Middle East History and Theory, Medieval Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Religions in America, Early Christian Studies, Jewish Studies, and Hebrew Bible. In addition, the Divinity Students Association offers a range of workshops and clubs: one for each area and others according to student interest. Current groups include Buddhist Studies, the Women's Caucus, and The Sacred Flame. To learn more, visit [divinity.uchicago.edu/clubs-and-workshops](http://divinity.uchicago.edu/clubs-and-workshops).

## Recent Courses

Our faculty teach over 100 courses each year in the academic study of religion. Please visit [divinity.uchicago.edu/courses](http://divinity.uchicago.edu/courses) for current and past course offerings.

- **Microhistory and the Study of Religions** (Lincoln)
- **Tibetan Buddhism** (Wedemeyer)
- **Ethical and Theological Issues in Hinduism** (Doniger)
- **Spanish Civil War: Religious Issues** (Lincoln)
- **Music, Meaning, and Mantra in Aspects of Indian Thought** (Kapstein)
- **Tantra in Practice** (Kapstein)
- **Mahayana Sutra Literature** (Wedemeyer)
- **Christianity and Korea** (Heo)
- **American Mythologies: Screwball Comedies** (Lincoln/Doniger)
- **Religions of Tang China and the Eastern Silk Road** (Copp)
- **Ancient Empire and the Ideology of Salvation** (Lincoln)
- **Interpretation of Ritual** (Lincoln)
- **Histories of Japanese Religion** (Ketelaar)
- **Buddhist Narratives** (Collins)
- **Representation and Ideology in the Study of South Asian Religions** (Wedemeyer)
- **Religious Law, Secular Law, and Sexual Deviation in Ancient India** (Doniger)
- **Seminar: Buddhist Thought in Tibet** (Kapstein)
- **Contemporary Perspectives on the History of Religions** (Wedemeyer)
- **Spirits of Capitalism** (Heo)



## The University of Chicago Library

Our library is one of the largest and richest research collections (both in print and online formats) in the world. Religious Studies has been a core component of the collection since the University's founding, and its current strengths match the research needs of the areas of study in the Divinity School. The Library has a full-time Bibliographer for Religion and Philosophy who holds workshops specifically designed for those studying religion. To learn more visit [library.uchicago.edu](http://library.uchicago.edu).

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