

# CIRCA

News *from* the University of Chicago Divinity School

UNTIL VERY RECENTLY SCHOLARS OF RELIGION CHARTED THEIR LOCATIONS AND THE FIELD generally on an axis of east and west. The east/west distinction denominated what one studied. Scholars of Christianity and Judaism and Islam studied “the western religious traditions”—usually specializing in one of the three—and scholars of Buddhism and Hinduism, or of indigenous traditions of Asia, studied “eastern religions.”

Today that distinction is no longer tenable. It is commonly acknowledged that the religions themselves, in their conceptions and their histories, have not observed them. To take one particularly formative example, the Orthodox Christian tradition, centered in Constantinople/Istanbul, actually stands at a geographical crossroad of east and west. Yet it was often referred to—in ways of which Orthodox practitioners would disapprove—as ‘eastern Christianity’. The unprecedented movements of peoples and the new and vaunted communication technologies have also helped to break down such distinctions. Our world today is both logistically smaller, and comparatively much more accessible in much greater detail, than ever in history. One consequence is that the religions are less subject to the vagaries of geography, and both more and less subject to cultural stereotype, than ever before.

Beyond acknowledging the facts of the case, there is one further reason why this recognition is important. It is at least arguable that the distinction of east and west reflected an orientation toward Christianity as the normative tradition for understanding the human phenomenon of religion; indeed, further, that this *de jure* approach had the further *de facto* limitation that the tradition was not all of Christianity but the Christianity first of Rome, and then of wider European and, later, North American history.

Equally salient and valuable, and crucial to retain in the process, is the fact that the values that produce, inform, and sustain this critique are in fact spawned by the traditions whose hegemony has been displaced. The heritage of the Enlightenment—the capacity to bring one’s most cherished assumption under scrutiny, the commitment to disinterested reason, the willingness to

## Letter from the Dean



The study of religion as we practice it today is decidedly a product of a tradition of intellectual thought (with vigorous representation in both “west” and “east”).

change one’s mind—are precisely the values that undergird this adjustment in the study of religion.

The challenge for the work of the Divinity School in the twenty-first century is to honor this revision of our topic of study without discarding the methods that have served it so well. We must continue to recognize and understand our heritage, but without allowing it to distort what “counts” as religion. Put prosaically, the revision I describe above should not require tossing out the scholarly baby with the bath water. The study of religion as we practice it today is decidedly a product of a tradition of intellectual thought (with vigorous representation in both “west” and “east”). The empirical realities that mandate adjustments in no way alter this fact. As we proceed to reorient our academic North Star, we must not discard the sextant—we simply and crucially must adjust its lens to permit a broader view.

Such work is already well under way in Swift Hall. I would mention three examples from among many of my colleagues. Philosopher of religion Dan Arnold studies Buddhist thought from the fifth to the twelfth centuries, and locates there sustained and sophisticated discussions of such formerly “western” topics as what counts as evidence for truth and what it means to have a mind, collating this work with discussions among Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment philosophers in Europe and America. Historian Jim Robinson studies traditions of textual interpretation and the relation of science to religion in the medieval world. His scholarship is oriented chiefly toward Jewish traditions of exegesis and thought, but continually references Islamic and, on occasion, Christian thought and practice. To study medieval religion in Europe is to study not one tradition but three. Political scientist Malika Zeghal studies Islam as

*Continued on page 12*

# Faculty News and Notes



Several Divinity School faculty members have recently received awards in recognition of their work to date and in support of their current research projects. To access online faculty profiles, which include bibliographies, photographs, and contact information for all faculty members, please see <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/faculty/>.

## Faculty Notes



### Zeghal Receives Carnegie Grant

Malika Zeghal has been named a 2009 Carnegie Fellow for her commitment to enriching the quality of public discourse on Islam. She is among a group of twenty-one young thinkers who will receive a two-year grant of up to \$100,000 from the Carnegie Corporation, which in recent years has focused heavily on advancing public dialogue on Islam.

Zeghal, Associate Professor of the Anthropology and Sociology of Religion and of Islamic Studies, received the award to support the completion of her forthcoming book,

*Sacred Politics: The Contemporary Arab State, Secularity and Islam*. Zeghal's work aims to challenge the conventional interpretation of secularity as a Western phenomenon that is closely associated with democratic practices.

A political scientist who studies religion through the lens of Islam and power, Zeghal is particularly interested in Islamist movements and in the institutionalization of Islam in the Muslim world, with an emphasis on the Middle East and North Africa in the post-colonial period and Muslim diasporas in North America and France.

Her forthcoming book is a comparative analysis of the role of Islam in Middle Eastern modern authoritarian states and in the secular modern democracy of France. Her work will entail an in-depth examination of Islamist movements in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan.

"I hope to produce a work that will deepen our understanding of Islamist political movements by demonstrating to what extent they are a by-product of state theologies and state regulation of Islam," said Zeghal, who added that she hopes the book will be of interest not only to scholars of religion and politics, but also to policy-makers and the public.

### Tanner Elected President of the American Theological Society

Kathryn Tanner, the Dorothy Grant Maclear Professor of Theology, has been elected President of the American Theological Society. As President of the ATS, Tanner will preside over the 2009–10 sessions and give a presidential address to the hundred-member group.

Founded almost one hundred years ago, the ATS encompasses leading scholars from across the denominational spectrum. Former presidents include scholars Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, Cardinal Avery Dulles and Geoffrey Wainwright, the founding editor of *Christianity Today*. Chosen by her peers, Tanner is the third woman elected president of the organization, which meets annually at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey to discuss current theological issues.



“It is a wonderful recognition of her scholarship, teaching and collegiality, which we at Chicago, like the members of ATS, treasure and hold in great esteem,” said Richard A. Rosengarten, Dean of the Divinity School.

A University of Chicago faculty member since 1994, Tanner gears her scholarship, which involves constructive Christian theology in the Protestant tradition, to both academic and mainstream audiences. Her work often explores contemporary challenges to belief.

Tanner earned all of her degrees—a B.A., M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D.—from Yale University. In 2007, she presented the prestigious Warfield Lectures at Princeton Seminary.



### Nussbaum Awarded the 2009 A.SK Prize by Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

**Martha Nussbaum**, the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics, has been awarded the 2009 A.SK prize by the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung. The award pays tribute to social system reformers.

Nussbaum earned the honor for her work on the foundations of social and global justice, which she studies using a “capabilities approach” to measure the quality of people’s lives. “Women, the rural poor and other subordinated groups are usually injured by policies focused on growth alone, since they rarely control the fruits of a nation’s general prosperity.” Nussbaum said. “My work on the ‘capabilities approach’ is meant to change the emphasis of the development process so that the first question asked is always, ‘What does this policy mean for the ability of people to live flourishing lives?’” The traditional focus is on GNP per capita, which hides huge inequalities.

Nussbaum, author of numerous books, including *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* and *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*, is also cofounder of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA).

## Appointments

### Chavel Appointed Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible

**Simeon Chavel** has joined the Divinity School as Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, effective July 1, 2009. In his work he is drawn to the religious imagination of ancient Israel, keen to revivify its ideas, modes of expression, and history. Often, he finds himself pulled to literary questions of genre, rhetoric, and poetics in the Hebrew Bible. Sometimes, he ventures off into the relationship between history and forms of historiography. In all cases, he tends to keep one eye trained broadly on ancient Near Eastern culture and another trained more acutely on composition history (a.k.a. “source criticism”), manuscript history (“textual criticism”) and interpretation (especially rabbinic). One example of his interdisciplinary style is his article, “The Second Passover, Pilgrimage, and the Centralized Cult,” published in the *Harvard Theological Review* 102 (2009). Currently, he is completing his first book, *Oracular Law*



and *Narrative History: The Priestly Literature of the Pentateuch* (to be published by Mohr Siebeck), on a type of short story about law and legislation—the “oracular novella”—and its significance for the priestly literature in particular and biblical historiography in general.

Chavel received his Ph.D. from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He joins the Divinity School from Princeton University.

### Nirenberg to Deliver Nuveen Lecture

**David Nirenberg**, the Deborah R. and Edgar D. Jannotta Professor of Medieval History and Social Thought, has been selected to deliver the 2009 John Nuveen Lecture. His Nuveen Lecture is titled “Scriptural Conflict, Scriptural Community: Judaism, Christianity, Islam.” Nirenberg’s work has focused on the ways in which Jewish, Christian, and Islamic cultures constitute themselves by inter-relating with or thinking about each other.

His first book, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, studied social interaction between the three groups within the context of Spain and France, in order to understand the role of violence in shaping the possibilities for coexistence. In more recent projects he has taken a less anthropological and more philosophical approach, studying how religious communities have used ideas about each other in order to develop their distinctive critical sense of the cosmos, and exploring some of the consequences of that codependence. One strand of that project is Nirenberg’s forthcoming book *The Figure of the Jew: from Ancient Egypt to the Present*, expected from W.W. Norton next year. He has also explored the role of Judaism in Christian aesthetics in a series of essays, the most recent being “Shakespeare’s Jewish Questions” to “The Unbearable Judaism of Christian Art.”

Although often focused on these specific religious traditions, his more general interest is in the history of how the possibilities and limits of community and communication have been imagined. That interest has engaged him in two long-term thematic projects: the first a history of love’s central place in a number of ancient, medieval, and modern idealizations



of communication and exchange; and the second a parallel study of poison as a representation of communication’s dangers. Nirenberg also writes about history, politics and religion in less academic venues, such as *The New Republic*, *The London Review of Books*, and *Dissent*.

Please see <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/alumni/awards/nuveen> for more information on the Nuveen Lecture series.

Nirenberg will deliver the Nuveen Lecture on Thursday, October 29, at 4:00 p.m. in Swift Lecture Hall.

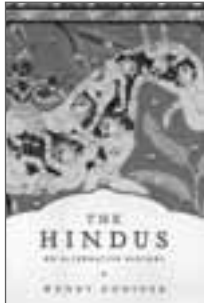
# News and Notes

## Doniger Receives Honorary Doctorate from Harvard

**Wendy Doniger**, the Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions, received an honorary degree as a Doctor of Letters from Harvard University at its commencement on Thursday, June 4, 2009.

Doniger, for whom this is her sixth honorary degree, received both her M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard. She is a scholar of Hindu religious traditions as well as an editor, translator, novelist, and memoirist. She holds a second doctorate from the University of Oxford.

Doniger has held academic appointments at Harvard College, Oxford University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Chicago, where she has taught since 1986. She has written nearly three hundred academic papers and is the author



of more than thirty books. In March, *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, was published. In press is *Hinduism*, for the Norton Anthology of World Religions (2011). She is currently on the editorial boards for *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and several journals.

## Yu Receives Norman Maclean Award

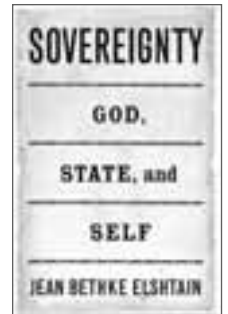
**Anthony C. Yu**, the Carl Darling Buck Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in the Humanities and Professor Emeritus of Religion and Literature; also in the Departments of Comparative Literature, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and English Language and Literature, and the Committee on Social Thought, received the Norman Maclean Award from the University of Chicago on Saturday, June 6, 2009.

The Norman Maclean Faculty Award honors emeritus or very senior faculty for extraordinary contributions to teaching and to the student experience of life within the University community. The award carries with it a library fund, endowed by the Alumni Association Board of Governors, for purchase of books in the faculty member's honor.

## Elshtain Receives Alumni Achievement Award

**Jean Bethke Elshtain**, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics, received the William E. Morgan Alumni Achievement Award presented by The Colorado State University Alumni Association. The award recognizes CSU alumni and friends who have distinguished themselves professionally, brought honor to the University, and have made significant contributions of time and/or philanthropy to the university or their community.

Professor Elshtain, regularly named as one of America's foremost public intellectuals, lectures widely in the United States and abroad on themes of democracy, ethical dilemmas, religion and politics, and international relations. In 2002, she received the Goodnow Award, the highest award bestowed by the American Political Science Association, for distinguished service to the profession. She is the author of five hundred essays and twenty books, including *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy* (honored by the Society of Midland Authors in 2002); and *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World* (named one of the best nonfiction books of 2003 by *Publishers Weekly*). She has recently published her Gifford Lectures under the title *Sovereignty: God, State, and Self* (2008).



## Dean Rosengarten Receives Outstanding Fethullah Gülen Award

**Richard A. Rosengarten**, Dean and Associate Professor of Religion and Literature, was awarded a 2009 Niagara Peace & Dialogue Award from the Niagara Foundation, which awards individuals and organizations who have contributed to the cause of dialogue, peace, tolerance, community service and understanding in Chicago. Rosengarten received the "Outstanding Fethullah Gülen Award" for 2009.

Fethullah Gülen is a Turkish Islamic philosopher who has devoted his life to dialogue and peace among cultures; he is also the honorary president of the Niagara Foundation.

Under Dean Rosengarten, the Divinity School created the Chicago Forum on Pedagogy and the Study of Religion, a three-year forum of plenary talks, panel discussions and graduate student workshops, which explored the issues that surround teaching the academic subject of religion. A new and important step in educating future religion professors, the Chicago Forum helped boost the Divinity School's reputation as the premier "teacher of teachers" in the study of religion.



**Peter Homans** 1930–2009

University of Chicago Professor Emeritus Peter Homans died Saturday, May 30, 2009.

Homans, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Religious Studies, is best known for his groundbreaking work on the relationship between religion and psychology in the process of mourning. Homans concentrated his teaching and writing on the histories, theories, and practices of mental and spiritual healing, especially on their roots in religious traditions.

Homans was the author of three books: *Theology After Freud*, *Jung in Context* and most notably, *The Ability to Mourn: Disillusionment and the Social Origins of Psychoanalysis*. All of his works reflect a lifelong interest in the important place of cultural and religious symbols in the psychological life of the individual and

the sociological life of a society.

Homans also studied the symbolic and psychological aspects of contemporary cultures, and he spoke and wrote extensively on the ways that breakdowns in social certainties and regularities in society call forth a need for "meaning making" in order to restore cohesion. His last book is an edited collection, *Symbolic Loss: the Ambiguity of Mourning and Memory at Century's End*.

Homans was born in New York City and received his undergraduate education in the humanities at Princeton University before earning a Bachelor of Divinity from the Virginia Theological Seminary and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1964.

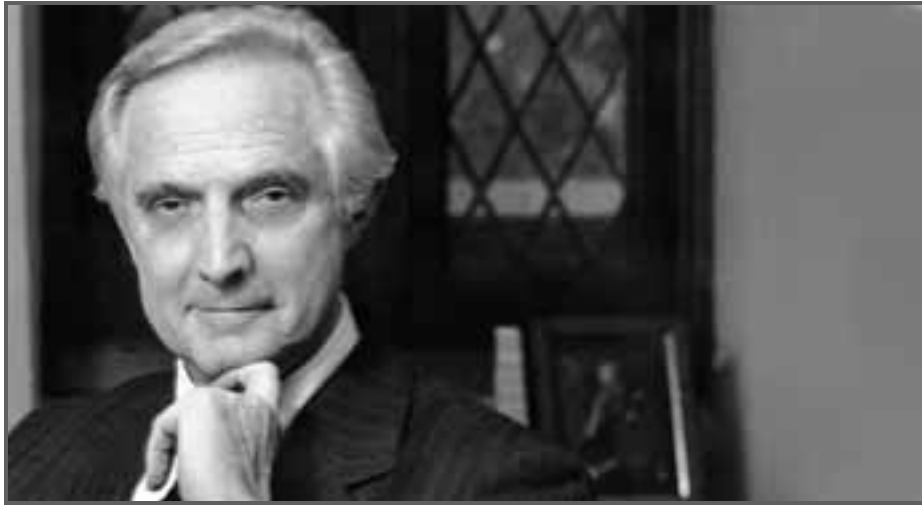
Homans taught social science and the history of religions at the University of Chicago from 1965 until his retirement in 2001. Richard Rosengarten, Dean of the Divinity School, says of Homans, "For over three decades, Peter Homans was a distinguished teacher and advisor to students at the Divinity School and in the University, and a leading thinker about psychology as a —if not the—decisive cultural expression of the 20th century."

A deeply caring and considerate teacher, Homans engaged generations of students with his cross-disciplinary approach. His research ranged from psychology to religion and from the humanities to social science and medicine.

He is survived by his wife, Celia; three daughters, Jennifer, Patricia and Elizabeth; and six grandchildren.

A memorial service was held in Bond Chapel on Saturday, June 20, 2009.

# Autumn and Winter Events



For calendar updates, please consult the Divinity School's website at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu>. Access the most up-to-date events information, sign up for our events listserv ("At the Divinity School"), and get current news. Please see p.7 for detailed information on upcoming Marty Center conferences, symposia, and talks.

## EVENTS INCLUDE



### Alumni Receptions at the AAR and SBL Meetings

The Divinity School's tradition of a Sunday night reception for alumni and friends at the AAR and SBL meetings continues. All Divinity School alumni and friends are cordially invited to join us at one or both of the receptions.

#### American Academy of Religion (AAR) Reception

**Sunday, November 8** 9:00–11:00 p.m.  
Montreal, Quebec, Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel

#### Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Reception

**Sunday, November 22** 9:00–11:00 p.m.  
New Orleans, Louisiana, Sheraton New Orleans

For more information about either event, please contact Mary Jean Kraybill at 773-702-8248 or [mjkraybill@uchicago.edu](mailto:mjkraybill@uchicago.edu).

### Wednesday Community Luncheons

#### Eight Wednesdays per Quarter

12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., Swift Common Room

#### Bond Chapel Worship

#### Eight Wednesdays per Quarter

11:30 a.m.–12:00 noon, Joseph Bond Chapel

### Special Event

**Chicago's Archaic Mark (MS 2427):  
A Report on the Results of  
Chemical, Codicological and  
Textual Analysis**

**Monday, October 26**

6:00–8:00 p.m.  
Special Collections Research Center  
Joseph Regenstein Library  
1100 East 57th Street

**Joseph Barabe**

*The McCrone Group, Westmont, IL*

**Abigail Quandt**

*The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore*

**Margaret M. Mitchell**

*The University of Chicago*



At this special session of the Early Christian Studies Workshop, jointly sponsored by the Library's Special Collections Research Center, the final results of a multi-year commitment by the University to solve a decades-long enigma—is this miniature codex a genuine Byzantine manuscript preserving a very early text-type of the Gospel of Mark or a modern forgery?—will be announced. The manuscript will be available for viewing, and Barabe, Quandt and Mitchell will document their findings and their implications in advance of their forthcoming article in the journal *Novum Testamentum*.

### Don Browning to give James Luther Adams Lecture

**Thursday, October 15, 4:00 p.m.**

**Don S. Browning**, the Alexander Campbell Professor Emeritus of Ethics and the Social Sciences, will deliver the James Luther Adams Lecture in Religion and Society for 2009–2010. The lecture is sponsored by the James Luther Adams Foundation.

James Luther Adams (Ph.D. 1945) was chair of the Department of Religious Ethics at the University of Chicago from 1943–1956 and, after his retirement from Harvard, was Professor of Theology and of Religious Ethics at the Divinity School from 1972–1977. The 1977 Divinity School Alumnus of the year, he was one of the most prominent American Christian social ethicists of his generation.

Professor Browning has interests in the relation of religious thought to the social sciences. He has special interests in psychoanalysis, self-psychology, object-relations theory, and evolutionary psychology, and has written on the cultural, theological, and ethical analysis of the modern psychologies. As Director of the Lilly Project on Religion, Culture, and the Family, Browning is now working on issues pertaining to the shape and future of the postmodern family. He has coauthored *From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate*.

The lecture, "Religion and Civil Society: In James Luther Adams, Reformed Theology, and Catholicism," will be held in Swift Hall Lecture Hall (3rd floor). A reception will follow.

### Border Crossing Series

Now in its third of three years, the Border Crossing Project continues its work of connecting ministry and doctoral students around discussions of vocation.

Three public conferences will explore the intersections and divergences of clergy and teachers' intellectual interests and professional pursuits.

For more information, see <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/programs>

**February 19, 2010**

#### The Prophetic Interpreter: Preaching and Teaching from Scriptural Traditions in Pluralistic Worlds

Ellen Davis, keynote address

**April 23, 2010**

#### Fifth Annual (student-organized) Ministry Conference

The project also puts local clergy and doctoral students in ministry classrooms, transforming the classroom context for all the participants. The Border Crossing Project is generously supported by the Lilly Endowment.

# An Interview with Jeffrey Stackert

Jeffrey Stackert is Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible. He began his appointment in autumn of 2008. In this interview Stackert discusses recent developments in his field and reflects on teaching at the Divinity School.

**CIRCA:** What are the most interesting recent developments in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament studies?

**JS:** The last few decades have seen surprisingly significant developments in our understanding of the Hebrew Bible. In terms of the text itself, the completion of the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which contain the oldest known biblical manuscripts, has significantly altered our understanding of the actual wording of the biblical books as well as the process of these ancient religious texts becoming “biblical.” The Dead Sea Scrolls similarly complicate the differentiation of biblical texts from interpretive texts that comment upon the Bible. This is because, in many cases, biblical interpretations in the ancient period were often not written separately from the texts they interpreted. Instead, biblical texts themselves were “rewritten,” and the scribes who penned these new texts inserted within them clarifications to their Vorlagen, ideological changes, and even entirely new material. This practice raises questions such as, how different from the “norm” must a text be to be considered “non-biblical,” especially in a time period before “the Bible” existed as such? And, how did the authors of these texts view them? For example, did they consider them “scripture”? Did their audiences?

With regard to biblical interpretation, the importance and impact of ancient Near Eastern evidence related to the Hebrew Bible has never been greater. Because of the paucity of evidence available from ancient Israel, parallels between the biblical text and other ancient Near Eastern material remains a basic source for understanding specific biblical texts and the larger circumstances of their composition. Moreover, because fields like



“I am fascinated by the ideas of these ancient authors and their relation to the intellectual life of the wider ancient Near East.”



Assyriology and Semitics are still relatively young by comparison with biblical studies, the material treated by these disciplines has not been pored over to the same extent as the Hebrew Bible. In fact, some ancient Near Eastern texts that shed important light on the Hebrew Bible are only now being discovered and/or becoming available. Other, more well-known ancient Near Eastern texts have still not been subjected to intense scrutiny. This means that, even though biblical studies is in some ways a mature field, we can continue to expect new discoveries from it, especially due to comparative approaches.

**CIRCA:** How is your experience teaching at the Divinity School different from your experience teaching at the University of Minnesota?

**JS:** Minnesota was a wonderful place to teach. I had very good colleagues, and while I was there the university was investing in both Jewish Studies and Religious Studies. My department (Classical and Near Eastern Studies) was very committed to the study of the ancient world, including ancient Israel, and we were able to give students a very solid training in philology and textual interpretation.

I would offer equal affirmation for Chicago. What is different about my teaching at the Divinity School is my focus upon graduate training rather than undergraduate

training. While I do teach some undergraduates in my Introduction to the Hebrew Bible course here, the majority of my offerings are graduate-level exegetical courses in which we read texts in their original languages. As one might expect, the students are stronger here at Chicago, which means that we can do more challenging work in the classroom. I am also able to integrate

more of my own research into my teaching. I think this integration benefits both me and my students: I can test new ideas that I am formulating, and my students can see the research process rather than simply the final product.

**CIRCA:** Why did you choose to focus on Deuteronomy in your research?

**JS:** While I also work on other aspects of the Hebrew Bible, it is true that I find myself returning to Deuteronomy time and again. In part this is now out of necessity, for I have agreed to write a commentary on the book of Deuteronomy for

a new series entitled *The International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament*. However, my interest in Deuteronomy is first born of this work’s fascinating relationship both to what preceded and followed it in the literary production of ancient Israel/Judah and Assyria. Though now part of the compiled Torah, Deuteronomy’s authors

“I think this integration benefits both me and my students: I can test new ideas that I am formulating, and my students can see the research process rather than simply the final product.”

intended their composition—and the religious perspectives that it advances—to displace an earlier literary work, the Elohistic (E) source of the Torah. To this end, they co-opted and creatively revised the content and even the specific wording of the E source, thereby borrowing its prestige while subverting its message. The Deuteronomic authors also exploited the Assyrian succession oath of Esarhaddon in service of this larger goal.

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# Marty Center News and Events



The Martin Marty Center builds on a long-standing conviction of the Divinity School that the best and most innovative scholarship in religion emerges from sustained dialogue with the world outside the academy. In all of its projects, the Center aims to serve as a robust circulatory system that strengthens, deepens, and extends scholarly inquiry by moving it through the deliberating bodies of the students, faculty, and public. — William Schweiker, *Director of the Marty Center*

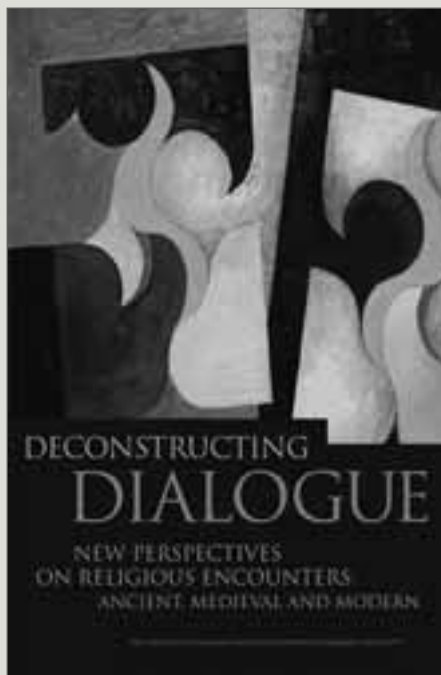
## Marty Center Conferences

### Deconstructing Dialogue: New Perspectives on Religious Encounters: Ancient, Medieval and Modern

Thursday–Saturday, January 21–23, 2010

Religious dialogue is an important feature of the modern religious experience. Closely related to liberalism, ecumenism, ideals of tolerance and mutual understanding, it seems to be a product of the Enlightenment. Or is it?

The goal of this conference is to initiate a new, critical, multi-disciplinary approach to the phenomenon of religious dialogue, and to problematize the Enlightenment origins and meanings of “dialogue.” Starting with questions of origins and development



— what is dialogue, how has it been defined and conceived, by whom and in what context — the conference will examine the genealogy of modern ideas and practices of religious dialogue in comparison to pre-modern traditions (of polemics and disputation, heresiography and heresiology) thus providing a broader framework for studying the ways ideas are discussed and debated across time and geographical or cultural divisions. A secondary aim is to shift attention away from a contemporary theoretical preoccupation with religious conflict solely apprehended through symbolic and physical violent confrontations. Religious interaction through dialogue — even in seemingly “positive” ways — is perhaps a far more subtle form of religious conflict and certainly a rich (if unexplored) site for scholarly investigation.

Please visit <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/conferences> for more details.

### Public and Private: Feminism, Marriage, and Family in Political Thought and Contemporary Life

Thursday and Friday, February 25  
and 26, 2010

Sponsored by the McDonald Agape  
Foundation

Over the next five years, the Divinity School will be hosting a series of four conferences reflecting on the scholarly contributions of Jean Bethke Elshtain across diverse fields of



study. This multi-year project is funded by a generous grant from the McDonald Agape Foundation.

Conference panels will be designed to foster dialogue among the speakers about the themes, arguments, and controversies raised by Professor Elshtain’s work, particularly as it intersects with their own areas of expertise.

The first conference will focus on feminism, the family, and civil society, particularly the themes set out in *Public Man, Private Woman*, now considered a classic work in modern political theory.

Future conference themes will be civil society, democracy, and religion; theology, religion, and politics; and gender, international relations, and just war. Each concentrates on a particular period in Professor Elshtain’s career, drawing out the debates most central to her work at that time. All conferences will be interdisciplinary



in scope and designed to be of interest to a broad audience.

Please visit <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/conferences> for more details, including speakers.



# Marty Center Fellowship Programs

## A Report from the Wilson Teaching Fellow

**E**ach year, the Alma Wilson Teaching Fellowship, made possible by a generous endowment gift, provides one advanced student in the Divinity School an opportunity for supervised teaching experience in the University of Chicago's undergraduate college. **Garry Sparks**, a Ph.D. candidate in Theology, reflects on his year of teaching.

It's an old and simple story: the "conquerors" came with the sword in one hand and the Bible in the other to divide and dominate. The locals, already living with an ancient prophecy of the return of an exiled magical ruler, mistook the Spaniards for gods—silly pagan natives, devious Catholic Castilians. Yet the paper trail is more loaded, complex, nuanced, and messy. The letters, apologetics, catechisms, sermons, wills and land deeds—not to mention early histories and first ethnographies of sixteenth-century America—break open, help fill out, and move beyond this two-dimensional portrayal. Not only the Spaniards kept records. The surviving documents written by Nahuas of Central Mexico as well as highland and lowland Maya provided the students in my class with a set of voices that, while not merely resisting or simply acquiescing to Hispano-Catholicism, responded and contributed to new religious systems. It is precisely the kind of story ripe for these mostly second-year students in the College to peel apart, which is what we did in "Missionaries and Mesoamericans in the 1500s."

As a Religious Studies course cross-listed in Latin American Studies, the readings were scheduled more topically than chronologically. Using Richard White's notion of the "middle ground"—where first encounters between Europeans and Native Americans more often than not resulted in jointly negotiated misunderstandings that estab-



lished not so much common ground but rather tenuous precedents for further political, economic, sexual, and religious relationships—the students read a scholarly translation of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's 1544 account of enslavement among locals along the Texas gulf coast. As one of four survivors, three Spanish and one African, Cabeza de Vaca recounts their repeated sale and eventual training as healers who use a mixture of native rituals and Trinitarian prayers. The reading and discussion raised questions for the students of local agency and conversion (of and by whom?), the mistaken homogeneity of Iberian explorers, and the role of mendicant friars in these early decades.

Such primary texts provoked questions and doubts in the students about the conventional story of "conquest." Alternatively,

they read secondary sources to nuance the mendicants: Spanish Dominicans and Franciscans, products of an earlier "reformation," polyglots from southern Iberia schooled in the emerging humanism of the University of Salamanca, military chaplains and critics of a nascent empire. Students noted the various and shifting analogies Spaniards established to try to understand who or what the indigenous peoples were: descendants of ancient Israelites, "lost" Jews, beasts of burden, or more akin either to cultivated Moors of

Toledo or to the ignorant Christians of rural Castile?

Students juxtaposed the various cultural and religious claims made by Spaniards and Mesoamericans through additional primary sources, such as an English translation of Spanish Dominican friar Pedro de Córdoba's Nahuatl catechism, Bartolomé's de Las Casas' *Brief Account*, and Miguel León-Portilla's anthology of translated accounts from sixteenth-century texts written by Nahuas. As the first official

mendicant missionaries did not arrive into present-day Mexico and Central America until 1519, the students gradually appreciated just how much was up for grabs—including religious meaning and ritual practice—by

*Continued on page 10*

“... They strove to make explicit the tensions regarding how the claims of Hispano-Catholicism were received by and reconciled with Mesoamerican religious claims.”

## New Religion and Culture Web Forum Editor Named

**M. Cooper Harriss** is the new Managing Editor for the Religion and Culture Web Forum, the Marty Center's monthly online forum for thought-provoking discussion on the relationship of scholarship in religion to culture and public life.

Mr. Harriss received a B.A. from Washington and Lee University, holds Master's degrees from the Division of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago and from Yale Divinity School, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Religion and Literature at the University of Chicago Divinity School. A former managing editor of *Ethics: An International Journal of Moral, Legal, and Political Philosophy*, Harriss was a Gerald Brauer Seminar Fellow in 2006, a Martin Marty Dissertation Fellow in 2008–09, and remains a regular contributor to the Marty Center's *Sightings*.

Harriss's dissertation concerns the religious dimensions and theological antecedents that inform the concept of race in the literary and critical writing of twentieth-century African-American novelist Ralph Ellison (1913–1994). Additional research interests include literary appropriations of expressive vernacular performance (preaching, musical forms such as the blues) in the formation of American culture and the role of irony in theological inquiry.

Harriss looks forward to participating in the broader missions of the Marty Center and the Divinity School as editor of the Web Forum, fostering public scholarly conversation reflecting on religious practice and its cultural iterations.

Read more about RCWF at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/publications/>





# Marty Center Fellows 2009–2010

The Marty Center, continuing its emphasis on global interactions and aspects of religion, will have three senior fellows and twelve dissertation (junior) fellows in 2009–2010.



This year's Marty Center dissertation seminar is being offered in two sections, one led by William Schweiker, Director of the Center; the other led by Willemien Otten, Professor of Theology and History of Christianity.

The Senior Research Fellows and Junior Dissertation Fellows, listed below, will participate in the seminar, which is designed to advance interdisciplinary research in all areas of religious studies. Dissertation Fellows will be required to present their individual projects not only within the seminar, before their peers, but before public interlocutors at a special spring meeting. The seminar's goal is to advance scholarship mindful of the public setting of all inquiry. The spring meeting helps participants articulate their projects in ways that will be intelligible to specialists and non-specialists alike.

## Senior Research Fellows

**W. David Hall** will be working on a project tentatively titled "Rhetorical Theology: Analogy, Metaphor, Hyperbole, and Irony in Religious and Theological Discourse." He is currently an Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Centre College.



**Sarah Hammerschlag** will be working on a project tentatively titled "Sowers and Sages: The Renaissance of Judaism in Post War Paris." Currently Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought at Williams College, she recently completed work on her first book project, *The Figural Jew: Politics and Identity in Postwar French Thought*.

**Slavica Jakelic** will be working on a project tentatively titled "Collectivistic Religions: Religion, Choice, and Identity in Late Modernity." She is currently the Research Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Co-director, Program on Religion, Culture, and Democracy at the University of Virginia.



## Senior Research Fellow Symposia

The Senior Fellow Symposia will allow each Senior Fellow to present his or her work in a public forum to members of the seminar, the entire Divinity School community, members of the University, and any interested persons. Please save these 2010 dates: January 28 (S. Hammerschlag); March 4 (W. David Hall); May 13 (S. Jakelic). All symposia are Thursdays from 4–6:00 p.m. in the Common Room.



## Dissertation Fellows

Of our twelve dissertation (junior) fellows, ten are Divinity School students and two are extradepartmental.

**Megan Doherty**, "Living with Understanding: Subjectivity and Metaphysics in Kant, Apel, and the Neoclassical Alternative"

**Debra Erickson**, "A World for People and People for the World: A Casuistic Approach to Environmental Decision-Making"

**Stephanie Frank**, "Liens Spirituels: Rereading Mauss, Reorienting 'The Gift'"

**Sarah Imhoff**, "Gender, Sexuality, Race and the Image of American Jews, 1910–1924"

**Jeffrey Jay**, "Heremeneutics of Tragic Understanding: Early Jewish and Christian Accommodations of Theatrical Culture"

**Santiago Piñon**, "A Study on Francisco Vitoria and His Defense of the Natives in the New World"

**Heather Miller Rubens**, "Also Other: Utilizing Different Minority Narratives in the Making of Anglo-Jewish Identity"

**Garry Sparks**, "Xalqat B'e and Theologia Indorum: Crossroads between Mayan Spirituality and the Americas' First Theology"

**Kristen Tobey**, "Performing Marginality: Identity and Efficacy in the Plowshares Nuclear Disarmament Movement"

**Susan Zakin**, "The Gift of Death: Acts of Imagination in the Ritual of *gCod*"



## Extradepartmental Fellows

**Nikolay Antov**, Department of History, "Formation of Muslim Communities in the Early Modern Ottoman Balkans: The Case of Deliorman (15th–16th centuries)"

**Loren Goldman**, Department of Political Science, "The Sources of Political Hope: Will, World and Democracy"

all sides until the arrival of the Jesuits, Spanish Inquisition, Council of Trent in the 1570s, and an 80 percent decline in the native population. Such tensions were never resolved in the class but rather aimed to hone further questions and have the students delve deeper into the topics of their own interests—like human rights (a phrase coined by Las Casas), early ethnographies, and encounters between religious “others”—questioning basic concepts like “conversion,” “hybridity,” “authentic,” “insider/outsider,” and “idolatry” as found in the readings.

Many considering Latin American Studies as a major, the students had expressed from the offset their interest in looking closely at a particular historical and cultural period, one that planted so many of the seeds that still push through the liberationist, indigenous, literary, and post-colonial movements of today. Furthermore, despite and due to their personal religious affinities (ranging from practicing and apathetic Catholics,

intrigued agnostics, and a child of Protestant missionaries to Latin America) they repeatedly parsed out, contextualized, and scrutinized the religious agendas and perspectives of the historical characters: Spanish, Aztec, and Maya.

Eventually we paid acute attention to contemporaneous literature written by indigenous Mesoamericans, with students reading closely two highland Mayan texts as a case example: the *Popol Wuj*, or Mayan “Book of the Council,” and the *Title of Totonicapán*. Written around 1554, both offer the most extensive cosmogonic and pre-contact historic accounts written by any indigenous group within the Americas. Most notably for the students, the first text declares itself to be “the root of the ancient word” and distinguishes itself from “utterances about God” in “this time of Christendom.” The students teased out the “myth” from the “history,” debated the differences between



the two, and noted tensions among the Maya as they had among the mendicants. They strove to make explicit the tensions regarding how the claims of Hispano-Catholicism were received by and reconciled with Mesoamerican religious claims.

A final reading by another Dominican friar, Diego de Landa, brought the course back around to end with another precarious “defense” by a Spaniard. Like Cabeza de Vaca and a contemporary of the “defender of the Indians” Las Casas, De Landa lived extensively among native peoples and wrote one of the most important ethnographies on the Maya but, in the end, he carried out a local inquisition and burned the remaining Yukatek libraries, thus marking an end to a unique period of human interactions and radical religious encounters.

## Dean of Students’ Report



### Enrollment

This fall, the Divinity School enrolled ninety-six entering degree candidates: five A.M.R.S., fifty-six A.M., eighteen M.Div., and seventeen Ph.D.

### Convocations

#### Summer 2008

**M.A.**  
Trevor Fiske Crowell  
Andres Tupac Cruz  
Allyson Celeste Gonzalez  
Jane Alycia Hesse  
Coleman Armstrong  
Hillstrom  
Alexander Ong Hsu  
Nicole E. Ream  
Thomas McKay Schmidt

#### Ph.D.

David Charles Albertson  
Kristin Cook Bloomer  
Warren Ozell Chain  
Matthew Devin Drever  
Matthew Franklin Rose  
Jennifer M. Schuberth

#### Autumn 2008

**M.Div.**  
Daniel Theodore Burton

**M.A.**  
Briana McLeon  
Wright Bizier  
Leslie Anne Nechville  
Daniel Raymond Reddy

#### Winter 2009

**Ph.D.**  
Laurena Ann Brink  
Adam Wade Darlage

#### Spring 2009

**M.Div.**  
Vincent Michael Amlin  
Erin Kathleen Bouman

Lindsey Erin Braun  
Bonnie Kathryn Carenen  
Adam Michael Frieberg  
Alexander Scott Kindred  
Tabitha Kay Knerr  
Bethany Watkins Lowery  
Matthew Ryan Robinson  
Jocelyn A. Wilson  
Adriene Suzanne Zedick

#### M.A.

Nissy Ann Abraham  
Maria Eugenia Albina  
Brittany A. Bates  
Jason Grant Cather  
Molly Beth Clack  
Aimee Elizabeth Craig  
Andrew David DeCort  
Elisabeth De Kleer  
Erik Dreff  
Andrew F. Durdin  
Andriy Dyachenko  
Jeffrey I. Fowler  
Berkeley Anne Franz  
Sarah Fricke  
James Nicholas Hoey  
Edward C. Huddleston  
Yoav Alexander Isaacs  
Andrew Mark Langford  
Maria Joy Lindquist  
Kevin Patrick McCabe  
Daniel Patrick McNamara  
Amanda Elizabeth Mildner  
Randall Moore  
Allison Christine Mull  
Rebecca Claire Mumaw  
Benjamin Paul Murphy  
David Aaron Nagdemon  
Matthew Steven Noggle  
Jonah Efreml Perlin  
Alexander Justin Perry  
Katherine Elizabeth  
Rand Pflaum

Rashi Rohatgi  
Suzanne Michele Schwartz  
Emily Spero Smith  
Anne Elizabeth Tedore  
Sarah Shaw Yardney  
Daniel Alan Yingst

#### Ph.D.

Erik William Davis  
Spencer Lee Dew  
Hillel Charles Gray  
Peder Joshua Jothan  
S. Romi Mukherjee  
Mark William Stapp  
Alicia Marie Turner

### Student Fellowships, Grants, and Awards

**The Francis X. Kinahan Award**  
Brian James Clites

**The John Gray Rhind Award**  
Erin Kathleen Bouman

**Foreign Language and Area Study Fellowships (FLAS)**  
*Academic Year*

Katrina Alexis Brooks  
Jami Garton  
Natasha LeeAnn Mikles  
Craid Stephen Peters

#### Summer Quarter

Katrina Alexis Brooks  
Natasha LeeAnn Mikles  
Craid Stephen Peters  
Alexandra Kathryn Zirkle

**Fulbright IIE US Student Program Grants**  
Anne Taylor Mocko

**Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship**  
Jeremy Gantz Morse

**Furstenberg Fellowship**  
Pesach Abraham  
David Weinstein

**William Rainey Harper/Provost’s Dissertation-Year Fellowship**  
Elizabeth Ann Hopp-Peters

**Provost’s Dissertation-Year Fellowship**  
Jeffrey Irving Israel

**Provost’s Summer Fellowship**  
Kristel Ann Clayville  
Anne Katherine Knafel  
Jeremy Gantz More  
Noah Daniel Salomon

**Wilder Fellowship**  
Carrie Beth Dohe

### College Graduates in Religious Studies 2008–2009

Eight students completed fourth-year B.A. papers in Religious Studies this year, led by the B.A. paper preceptor, Adam Darlage. They and their topics are (advisors’ names follow in brackets):

**Michael Ball**, “Rethinking God in the Classroom: Religiously Affiliated

Charter Schools and the Tradition of American Public Education” (W. C. Gilpin).

**Daniel Bockrath**, “On Apoha and the Origin of Language: A Conceptual Understanding of Perception” (D. Arnold).

**Clair Mesick**, “Text and Body, Soul and Scripture: Epektasis and Exegesis in Gregory of Nyssa’s Commentary on the Song of Songs” (M. Mitchell).

**Erik Nordbye**, “Asceticism, Marxism, and Social Conflict: An Interpretation of Evangelical Poverty in the Theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez” (D. Hopkins).

**Jason Ralph**, “Driven Up by the Spirit of Devotion and Grace: The Varieties of Religious Experience in the Sister-books of Engelthal, Unterlinden, and Toss” (W. Otten).

**Justin Schilke**, “Protestantism and the Progress of Marriage: Luther and the new Marital Ideal” (S. Schreiner).

**Amanda Steele**, “King Lear and England’s Religious and Political Turmoil at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century” (D. Bevington).

**J. Haskell Swygert**, “The Free Spirit and the Ethic of Authenticity: Shifting Perspectives as an Educational Process” (W. Schweiker).

Some of our Ph.D. graduates are available for appointment. Their resumes can be accessed online at: <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/employment>.

# Ministry Program Update



## Experiential Learning and Definitions of Ministry

**A**n oft-quoted African proverb admonishes: “When you pray, move your feet.” In our first year ministry sequence this year, we extended this principle to the classroom: “When you learn, move your feet.”

Each year, the first-year cohort of the Ministry program takes part in a weekly Ministry Colloquium class that spans all three quarters. The class has long included opportunities to reflect on ministry and the stories and selves ministry students bring to the study of ministry. In the 2009 Spring quarter a new element was added: an opportunity for experiential learning through a visit to an existing ministry site. We had the opportunity to briefly take part in the ministry of Father Kelly and the Catholic jail ministry at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center and then to make a visit to Kolbe house, where related ministry takes place in the neighborhood context. Through the lens of this experience, we reflected back on the definitions of ministry that we had each constructed during the previous quarter. We were confronted with the inevitability that ministry, whatever abstract definition of it we might construct in the classroom, must inevitably be shaped by its context. The University of Chicago’s predilection for the theoretical can be useful to a minister, but can never be enough.

To be inside a Detention Facility was a new experience for most of us, and though it was not entirely unlike what we might

have expected, the experience was nothing we were prepared for. It is one thing to have a sense of some of the systemic injustice that is part of the experience of incarceration, but entirely another to see it happening to real human beings. We later shared some of our impressions of the visit, and the list seemed endless—each person had been struck in a different way by the environment where these young people were living and developing towards adulthood.

For me, the most striking element of the experience was a set of banners in the school, each one proclaimed in colorful cut-out felt letters another line of Dorothy Nolte’s poem “Children Learn What They Live.” *If children live with hostility, they learn to fight. If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.* We learned from Fr. Kelly and from the young people we met that the rules change a little bit almost every day and are often enforced with caprice by guards who have a great deal of latitude in interpreting those rules. Almost all of the day is spent ‘on unit’, where no books are allowed and television and playing cards are the only activities available. Only a few minutes of telephone contact with outside families and communities are permitted each week.

*If children live with fairness, they learn justice. If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.* After our visit, we had to walk past the banners again. The irony of these cheerful artworks was not lost on me. It filled me with a kind of helpless rage.

Father Kelly spoke eloquently to us about his understanding of his ministry as primarily a ministry of presence. His commitment to his ministry grows out of his Christian faith, but he does not try to convert the young people to whom he ministers. Nor, especially when they are in the jail, does he begin by trying to convince them of the error of their ways or persuade them to toe the line more faithfully in the future. Instead, he is a dependable and trustworthy presence, a person who is willing to listen and shows a consistency. Though this form of ministry was troubling for some of us, who were worried at what might seem to be complacency in the face of damaging behavior, it seemed to many of us to reflect a refreshing wisdom and kindness.

Fr. Kelly’s ministry is also a ministry of presence in another way, a way to which I noticed many more of us responding with considerable agitation: though he is more aware than almost anyone of the profound injustice and ineffectiveness of the system in which he works, advocacy for systemic change is not the central part of his work. When he asked us for questions, many of us jumped in with questions like, “What can we do? Who needs to be told in order to make things right?” We are accustomed to thinking up solutions and mobilizing resources to make right what seems out of order. Fr. Kelly’s ministry, with real people rather than in a classroom, doesn’t labor under the misconception that every problem has a clever “right answer” if you just think about it hard enough. Instead he does the work he can with the people he is called to serve.

This kind of ministry is limited by its context, unlike the theoretical ideas of ministry we came up with in the classroom, and that limitation was frustrating for us to wrestle with. Yet the work this ministry does is real, a strength that outstrips its

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**“...ministry, whatever abstract definition of it we might construct in the classroom, must inevitably be shaped by its context.”**

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limitations. Through Fr. Kelly’s ministry of presence, however inadequate to its massive task it may sometimes seem, children are learning what they live: respect, dependability, and kindness.

— C. Glauster, *Second-year Ministry Student*



a global phenomenon, utilizing case studies from North Africa, Western Europe, and North America to understand how Muslim thought and practice have engaged modernity and its aftermath. Her work forces a rethink-

ing of our fundamental assumptions about the politics of religion in the last century.

This is not solely a function of individual colleagues. It is also reflected in broader intellectual understandings: in, for examples, the incorporation of the history of interpretation into the study of sacred scriptural traditions like the Bible and the Qur'an, which emphasize the reception of the text within communities as a crucial window into our understanding of the text; the transformation of the study of theology into the study of modern religious thought, locating commonalities in the Jewish and Christian, and potentially the Islamic traditions; in the rethinking of the terms and reliability of

categories of comparison in the history of religions; and in the interesting fact that the student who studies the medieval period in the Divinity School today could be studying Christianity or Judaism or Islam — but is more likely to be studying at least two of those three.

We no longer demarcate our work by “east” and “west,” but we do still reflect the fundamental values of enlightened rationality that make what we do a part of the broader enterprise of humane discourse — and continue to make religion the most fascinating object of inquiry in today's world. □

Richard A. Rosengarten, *Dean*

**Stackert Interview** *Continued from page 6*

In one sense, however, whatever success Deuteronomy achieved was short-lived, for Priestly authors soon afterward exploited and revised Deuteronomy toward their own end. Still, the impact of Deuteronomistic thought is clearly visible across much of Hebrew Bible. Deuteronomy is also one of the most well-attested biblical books among the Dead Sea Scrolls and one of the most cited biblical books in the New Testament. It is really a starting point for understanding the Hebrew Bible.

**CIRCA:** In your work you situate the bible in its historical context. Why did you choose this approach to the bible?

**JS:** The historical context of the Hebrew Bible is indispensable for its interpretation. At a most basic level, because the meanings of words are historically conditioned, we can only know what the Bible says by appealing to history. What's more, because we have a relatively small corpus of ancient Hebrew texts, we must look to cognate languages from



contemporary and adjacent time periods to illuminate some basic issues of biblical Hebrew language. These philological concerns then lead to larger inquiries concerning the literary genre of texts, their historical periodization, the ideas that they espouse, and their authorship and intended audience(s). For some readers, historical questions beyond lexical and grammatical issues are not primary.

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“... I find myself returning to Deuteronomy time and again.”

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They may be more interested, for example, in grounding modern religious doctrines in biblical texts or the history of these texts' interpretation. My interests, however, are primarily historical: I am fascinated by the ideas of these ancient authors and their relation to the intellectual life of the wider ancient Near East. I am also intrigued by the socio-political dimensions of biblical texts for their authors and audiences. My personal interests thus drive both my selection of texts for study and the particular methods I employ in my analysis.



**For calendar updates**, please consult the Divinity School's website at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/news/>. Access the most up-to-date events information, sign up for our electronic events calendar — “At the Divinity School” — and get current, and archived, news.