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DIVINITY SCHOOL

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AUTUMN 2021

# Criterion



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO | Divinity School





## FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

**T**his Autumn Quarter the Divinity School, and the University, returned to campus following the pandemic pause — over a year and a half of life in two dimensions. Returning to campus is both a return to the familiar — the paths we are used to walking, the classrooms we missed, the conversations at the table — and a turn to new things. For me, it is the first quarter of my service as Interim Dean, and so everything familiar is new again.

As I have thought about, and talked about, the changes we have experienced over the past few years, and the challenges — and opportunities! — we face as we return to campus, the multidimensionality of the Divinity School, the wonderful complexity of it all, has been very much on my mind. So it was a particularly exciting opportunity (and challenge!) to host the new president of the University of Chicago for a “Divinity Day.”

We began the quarter with this unique event — an immersion day visit from Paul Alivisatos, only recently arrived on campus as the 14th president of the University of Chicago. President Alivisatos, as it turned out, had never before been in Swift Hall, not even during his undergraduate years in the College! We hosted him for a full day of meetings and conversations, with students and faculty and staff, and discovered an amazing synchronicity between the President’s vision for an “engaged university” and what the Divinity School knows itself to be: a place to mix academic inquiry with connections to the wider world, theoretical reflection with practical application.



The day took us through every floor of our historic home in Swift Hall (along with a visit to Disciples Divinity House), beginning with breakfast in the Dean’s Office, where we talked briefly about the history of the school but, more importantly, our mutual excitement for the future. As we progressed through the day, we had meaningful and far-ranging (and sometimes even entertaining) discussions about *how* the Divinity School does its work. Brie Loskota, our inaugural Executive Director of the Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion, engaged with the president on issues of religion in public life and how the Divinity School reaches outside of academia (and how much more we can, and should, do on that front). A lunchtime discussion in our sunny Common Room with a panel of students from across our degree programs showcased the diversity of our students’ interests and trajectories. Faculty members discussed how we educate students for careers in academia and public religious leadership, the unique offerings of our academic degree programs, and the depth and breadth of the research being undertaken by the preeminent scholars of religion with whom I am privileged to work.

The day concluded under the angels in the Lecture Hall, and President Alivisatos left with two bags of faculty publications, laughter, and a promise to return perhaps the very next day for his 7:30 am coffee (Grounds of Being having also just reopened).

As I accompanied President Alivisatos throughout the day, as I witnessed the school show its many sparkling facets, it was an experience of pride; never have I been so proud of this space I have inhabited over the past 18 years. As the quarter went on, and I had the opportunity to see all of those facets of the School in action in a new light, as dean, that feeling has only grown. In complement to that feeling has been a growing sense of excitement. As I watched our first quarter ‘back in action’ and witnessed the amazing work being done, not only in our classrooms but also in strategic initiatives such as expanding our undergraduate offerings, in text-critical research, and in the everyday creation and re-creation of our Swift Hall community, my belief in the importance of our work has sparked and intensified.

And writing this, as the first quarter of my service as Interim Dean comes to a close, I look forward keenly to the next quarter, and the next season, and the next year in Swift Hall. I hope you, our alumni and friends, join me in these feelings of pride and excitement in the year ahead.

Warmly,

**JAMES THEODORE ROBINSON**  
INTERIM DEAN OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL  
CAROLINE E. HASKELL PROFESSOR OF THE HISTORY OF JUDAISM,  
ISLAMIC STUDIES, AND THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS



# Criterion

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*Our cover image is a detail of a 17th-century Flemish tapestry recently gifted to the Divinity School by Lili Gaubin. It hangs on the south wall of the Lecture Hall.*

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OUR MASTERS PROGRAMS welcome students of all ages and backgrounds. With the goal of making the academic study of religion more accessible to those who wish to pursue it with rigor and sophistication, students can focus on topics including Buddhism and Religious Ethics. See our website for more information.





## SELECT NEW COURSES

Every year our faculty develop new courses across the range of our curriculum.

Jewish and Islamic Ethics in Al-Andalus

Settler Religion: Searching for Indians

American Religion Since 1865

Veracity: The Ethics of Truth and Truth-telling

Saints and Other Exemplars

The Prophet Q

The Jewish Question in the 21st Century

Readings: Sufism in Morocco

The Scopes Trial in Historical Context

Religion and American Capitalism

Jewish Ethics: Arendt, Susman, Rand, Peixotto

Brauer Seminar: Theology of Nature and Nature of Theology

Melancholy: Readings in Medieval Christian Literature

Religion, Writing, Revolution

The Latinx Religious Experience in the US

Race and Religion: Theorizing Blackness and Jewishness

## UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ALUMNI HAVE INCREASED ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC RESOURCES IN THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION.

**atla** The Library is now subscribed to Atla Religion Database® (ATLA RDB®) with AtlaSerials PLUS® for Alumni.

Produced by Atla, a membership association of collectors and connectors in religion and theology, this combines the premier index to journal articles, book reviews, and collections of essays in all fields of religion with Atla's largest online collection of major journals.



Additionally, alumni now have free access to an enormous array of online scholarly resources through a new JSTOR subscription provided by the Library.

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*For more information on services and resources available to alumni, visit [guides.lib.uchicago.edu/alumni](https://guides.lib.uchicago.edu/alumni)*



John Holt (far right) with colleagues Shintaro Hara (far left) and Prof. Jehabduloh Jehsorhoh, whose painting "The Secret Flower of Pattani" is visible over Prof. Holt's shoulder.

## What Are We Talking About When We Talk About Religion?

"When we talk about religion, we more often focus on the adjective "religious," or *how* people are religious: contemplative/mystical, ethical/social, cognitive/epistemological, etc. Religious experiences can be dynamically sudden and explosively reorienting, or they can constitute gradual increases in spiritual awareness. In concert with talking about *how* people are religious, we also probe *why* people are religious: historically, anthropologically, psychologically, politically, economically, and theologically. In any of these instances regarding *how* and *why*, we understand that being religious can be a double-edged sword: a constructive, amelioratory, aesthetic or emotionally fulfilling experience of the sublime; or a despicable motivation and odious, detestable legitimization scenario responsible for many heinous and oppressive forms of human behavior. As a form of human behavior, a seminal dimension of every human culture, religion has cut both ways."

JOHN C. HOLT, PHD'77, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO DIVINITY SCHOOL ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR IN 2007 AND VISITING PROFESSOR OF THERAVADA BUDDHISM

Arguing on the Internet: Persuasion and Polarization

Chinese Responses to Christianity in the Ming Dynasty

Law and Culture in Rabbinic Literature

Art as Buddhism in Ancient India: Explorations in the Stupa of Amaravati and Other Monuments

Theological, Phenomenological, and Ethical Aspects of Prayer

Black Theology: Hopkins Versus Cone

Does American Democracy Need Religion?

The Bible and Ecology

Haj to Utopia: Race, Religion, and Revolution in South Asian America

Israel and American Jewry: Peoplehood, Religion, and Politics

Illicit Religion: Contesting Religious Freedom under the Law in Modern America

God-Given Whites: Christianity and White Supremacy in the United States from Colonization to Trump

Love, Desire, and Sexuality in Islamic Texts and Contexts

Religion, Race, and Gender in the (Un)Making of American Mass Incarceration

Public Policy and Bureaucracy



One often hears it said that “Buddhism is not a religion, it’s [...]” — with the ellipsis variously filled in with (e.g.) “a philosophy,” “a kind of mind science,” “a spiritual practice,” “a set of therapeutic techniques,” etc. What would it mean, though, to say either that Buddhism is or is not a “religion”? Why does it matter whether or not it is? In this course for undergraduates, Professor **Daniel A. Arnold** explores Buddhist analyses of the human predicament, the encounters of some Asian traditions with colonialism, empire, and modernity, and even something about what it is to be a human in today’s world.

## What inspired you to offer this class?

There is a persistent and familiar trope according to which it is said, sometimes quite emphatically, that Buddhism is not a religion, but rather a “mind science” (according to one idiom), or a “way of life,” or a “therapeutic practice” that can be deployed quite independently of a person’s religious convictions, or whatever — and there are lots of interesting and illuminating historical reasons why this idea has attached itself with particular persistence to

Buddhism. Why should it particularly be an issue only whether Buddhism counts as a religion?

I take it that in light of one straightforward response to such ideas, the question whether or not Buddhism “is a religion” is basically misguided and just not very interesting; for insofar as “religion” is not, in the first place, a natural kind but rather an intellectual construct, there can be no determinate answer to the question, which will always be a function of the particular context in which it is posed. What

is interesting is why it would matter to anyone in the first place whether or not Buddhism counts as a religion, and what might be at stake in their thinking so. For whom does it matter what the answer is? In what contexts is the answer important? It turns out there are lots of interesting things to be said about all this — things having to do with colonialism and empire, power and representation, science and religion, religion and the state, and the life of a 2,500-year-old tradition in the modern and postmodern worlds.

## What has been most interesting about teaching undergraduates in the College?

Among the many things that make it a joy to teach students in the College is that I know I can count on the students to have done the reading, and to be genuinely desirous of understanding it — something not at all safely presupposed in most pedagogical contexts.

**Is Buddhism a religion?**  
I hear there’s a good class on that next term.

## Is Buddhism a religion?

“I hear there’s a good class on that next term.”

DANIEL A. ARNOLD

## ARNOLD WINS FACULTY AWARD

**D**aniel A. Arnold, Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and a scholar of Indian Buddhist philosophy, has been recognized for his exceptional teaching with a 2021 Faculty Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Mentoring.

The classroom has long been the foundation of a transformative University of Chicago education. The University annually recognizes faculty for exceptional teaching and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students through the Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Awards, believed to be the nation’s oldest prize for undergraduate teaching; and the Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Mentoring, which honor faculty for their work with graduate students.



“One of the unique qualities of the University of Chicago is the amount of intellectual space allowed here to work at developing the kind of deep understanding that can only result from lots of trial and error,” said Arnold. That’s how he approaches not only his own research, but how he works with students.

As a philosopher working with first-millennium Sanskrit texts, many of which have not previously been translated in English, Arnold knows interpretation is a meditative and painstaking process. “For close readers of philosophical texts, it’s a familiar experience to find oneself unsure exactly why a challenging passage is unclear — for example, whether there is some problem of a philological sort, or whether you’ve rightly read the text only not grasped what sense it makes for it to say what it does,” Arnold said. “Especially given the bright, motivated students we’re privileged to teach here, it’s invaluable for them to see their teachers struggling to resolve such a difficulty — to see not just what the answer is, but what it looks like to struggle to arrive at one.”

Arnold believes in giving students the space to make their own discoveries. His classroom style is intended to steer the conversation only gently, using what one student called “an almost magical ability to lead his students through a coherent argumentative arc.”

But in their nomination letters for Arnold, students also described the depth of support they received over the course of their studies: not only the careful and thorough attention paid to each piece of submitted writing, but also for the personal and intellectual development of students inside and outside academia. “He genuinely cares for the minds of those whose lives come to be entwined with his own for a time,” wrote another student.

## CLASS: RLST 23905: Is Buddhism a Religion?

### INSTRUCTOR:

**Daniel A. Arnold,**  
Associate Professor of the  
Philosophy of Religions

### READING LIST:

Stephen Batchelor,  
*Buddhism Without Beliefs*

The Dalai Lama,  
*The Universe in a Single Atom*

Donald Lopez,  
*The Scientific Buddha*

Nyanaponika Thera,  
*The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*

Robert Wright,  
*Why Buddhism is True*





Brie Loskota joined us in September as the inaugural Executive Director of the Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion. She brings us deep and broad experience in building strong organizations and networks; expertise in advising foundations, governments, and the media; and a research agenda which explores how religions change and make change in the world.

**How do you see the Marty Center partnering with other organizations and people to let religious knowledge serve the local community?**

Religious knowledge is already serving local communities, and real insights into how communities operate and thrive are being created and lived out in the congregations and organizations that they have built. We think it is imperative to understand that both the university and local communities

are sites for the creation of knowledge, insight, and know-how. Academics are not the only knowledge producers. Each site generates knowledge in its own distinctive way, and the Marty Center can play a catalytic role when it brings these different sites into conversation with one other.

**How will academic questions continue to inform the social and community aims of the Marty Center?**

In a lot of different ways! The Marty Center is unique because we invest

deeply in the academic work of scholars within the Divinity School, across the University, and with peers at other institutions of higher education. Some centers are formed around particular themes or research questions. At this stage in the Marty Center's development, we are focused on supporting the depth and range of questions our faculty and partners are interested in, helping them find ways to communicate these insights to interested audiences, and building relationships between the academy and

community. In this way, we are hoping to reflect the example of Prof. Marty — as a rigorous, prolific scholar, as a dedicated teacher in the classroom and the public square, and as a bridge-builder.

One of our exciting initiatives is on a research and documentation project about the ways in which Chicago area congregations and faith-related organizations have worked with public agencies and officials to set up Covid-19 testing and vaccination sites.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a unique disaster that has upended all kinds of norms and systems. We have an opportunity to explore how faith communities and government agencies interact over various waves of this disaster, what they are able to deliver together, what characteristics enabled or inhibited their response, and what could be done to strengthen their response to other disasters or crises in the future. This project is specifically about the pandemic, but it may give us insights into how faith communities and government agencies carry out the work of policy and the provision of social services. It could also raise interesting questions about the future of these types of partnerships especially as congregational life changes in the coming decades.



**VER THE COURSE OF HER TWENTY-YEAR CAREER (she came to us from her position as Executive Director of the**

**Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California) Ms. Loskota has sought to enhance religious pluralism and community resilience across a broad range of faith communities.**

She is the co-founder and senior advisor to the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute, and an implementing partner for the United States Institute of Peace's (USIP) Generation Change program, where she trains emerging leaders from the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Colombia. She is the co-creator of the Disasters and Religions religious literacy and competency app, which helps disaster responders better serve America's diverse religious communities and build partnerships with religious leaders. She was instrumental in the founding and development of the Cecil Murray Center for Community Engagement at USC which promotes civic engagement and economic development in Black and Brown churches.



As a widely published writer, her work has appeared in a range of publications from the *Los Angeles Times* to the Brookings Institution. She is regularly quoted in the media including in the *The Economist*, National Public Radio, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, Public Broadcasting, and Voice of America.

In 2017, Ms. Loskota was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum. She was a Marshall Memorial fellow, an Inclusive America Project fellow at the Aspen Institute, a Truman National Security fellow, and a fellow at the Safe Communities Institute at USC. She is a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, was a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and serves on the CFR Religion Advisory Committee. In 2019, she was elected to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion's Council and chairs SSSR's communications committee.

Inset: Brie Loskota in conversation with Willemien Otten, co-faculty director (with Alireza Doostdar) of the Marty Center.

**Visit [brieloskota.com](http://brieloskota.com), where you can read selected writings and learn more about Ms. Loskota's work.**

**Critical Editions for Digital Analysis and Research (CEDAR)** is a multi-project digital humanities initiative at the University of Chicago dedicated to creating new digital tools for text-critical research. CEDAR is built in the Online Cultural and Historical Research Environment (OCHRE), an XML graph database based at the University of Chicago and situated in the Humanities Division's new Center for Digital Studies.



ONE OF CEDAR'S LEAD PROJECTS TREATS THE HEBREW BIBLE. IT IS LED AT THE DIVINITY SCHOOL BY JEFFREY STACKERT AND SIMEON CHAVEL, WITH POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH SPECIALIST SARAH YARDNEY (PHD'17), AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, BY RON HENDEL.

The other lead project, led by Ellen MacKay of the Department of English, treats Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. CEDAR also includes projects on Sumerian and Akkadian Gilgamesh and the works of Herman Melville, and it is developing new collaborations with scholars on campus and around the world.

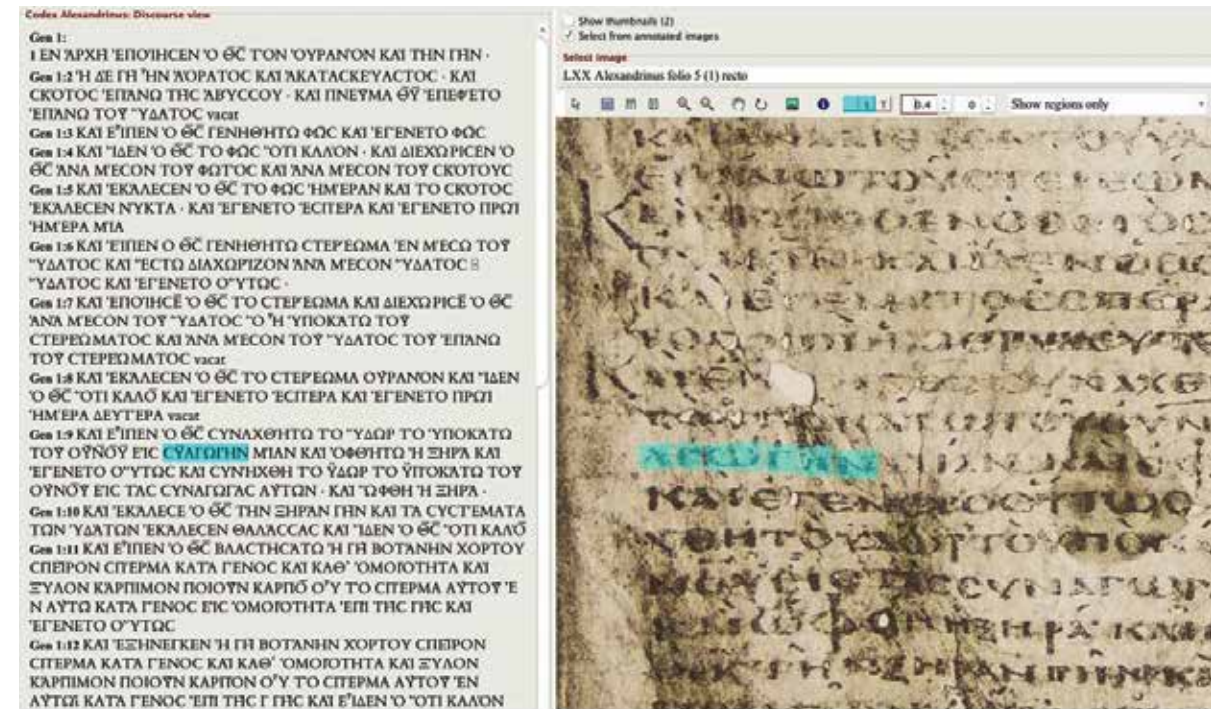
The tools offered by CEDAR, made possible by a new approach to encoding texts, represent a significant development in the history of textual criticism. There have been almost no conceptual advances in the tools for studying the differences between multiple versions of a text since the task was first undertaken in the Great Library of Alexandria before the Common Era. Word processors have made publishing easier, and digital imaging techniques can produce clearer and more detailed photographs of manuscripts, but for the most part scholars have continued to work with flat, static text and images.

CEDAR implements a new approach to encoding text that might be called the database model (see David Schloen and Sandra Schloen, "Beyond Gutenberg: Transcending the Document Paradigm in Digital Humanities," *DHQ* 8 [2014]). In the CEDAR project,

although we are creating tools to represent and study texts, there are no "texts" *per se* stored in the database. That is to say, the database does not store linear strings of characters comprising whole compositions. Instead, each line, each word, each character, and even each diacritical mark is stored as its own discrete XML file. This organization creates a distinction between how the user reads the data and how the data is organized in the database.

Such a distinction is not maintained in the dominant approach to encoding texts in the humanities, which might be called the document model. The document model both displays and organizes data in the same structure as physical documents, where characters are assigned a fixed position in one or two dimensions. This model fails to expand the kinds of research questions scholars can ask because it reproduces the design of print media.

The database model is especially powerful for textual criticism because the same database items are reused in different realizations of the same text. Combinations of these items are assigned to hierarchies that represent individual manuscripts. When the user asks to view the various manuscripts of, say, the biblical book of Genesis, the software generates them by gathering and arranging the same underlying database items according to each manuscript's hierarchies. The user sees separate texts, but within the database, each "text" is simply a recombination of the same building blocks. This structure means that instead of existing in one or two dimensions, as in the document model, texts in the database model exist as if in three dimensions. They can then, for example, be stacked one on top of the other, becoming like transparency sheets — a process that greatly facilitates comparison. The software employs visual cues (currently color-coding) to indicate where manuscripts agree and where they differ. Clicking on a character calls up information about alternative readings and where they are found.



**CEDAR** is an exciting advance in text-critical research that ultimately seeks a more democratic and critical engagement with both religious and other texts.

CEDAR also integrates transcriptions of manuscripts with images of the manuscripts themselves. After a digital image is added to the database, we can demarcate areas of the image to link to specific characters or words in the transcription. When a user clicks on the transcription, the linked character on the image is highlighted. Clicking on the image also highlights the linked character in the transcription. This feature, called "hot-spotting," is particularly useful for studying fragmentary or damaged manuscripts in which reconstructions may be uncertain, for it allows a scholar to communicate precisely which character traces are being interpreted. Furthermore, after a manuscript has been hot-spotted, a user can query the database for all images of a given character. This visual catalog serves as a script chart for evaluating broken characters, a feature

that greatly improves the precision of paleographical research and textual reconstruction.

CEDAR is an exciting advance in text-critical research that ultimately seeks a more democratic and critical engagement with both religious and other texts. It is also a valuable training opportunity for the students who are actively working on the project, both with respect to text-critical study and digital humanities research.

More information about the CEDAR Initiative can be found at [cedar.uchicago.edu](http://cedar.uchicago.edu).

*Jeffrey Stackert is Professor of Hebrew Bible.*

*Sarah Yardney (PhD'17) is Postdoctoral CEDAR Research Specialist.*



# Divinity School Convocation Speech Alireza Doostdar

THIS SPEECH WAS DELIVERED ON JUNE 10, 2021 AT THE DIVINITY SCHOOL'S DIPLOMA AND HOODING CEREMONY DURING THE UNIVERSITY'S 534TH CONVOCATION.

**G**reetings! Congratulations to the class of 2021 on graduating. Belated congratulations also to the class of 2020 for graduating. Most of all, congratulations to you, to your loved ones, to all of us, for patiently slogging through this baffling, terrifying, excruciating hellscape of a year that we can only hope is nearing its end.

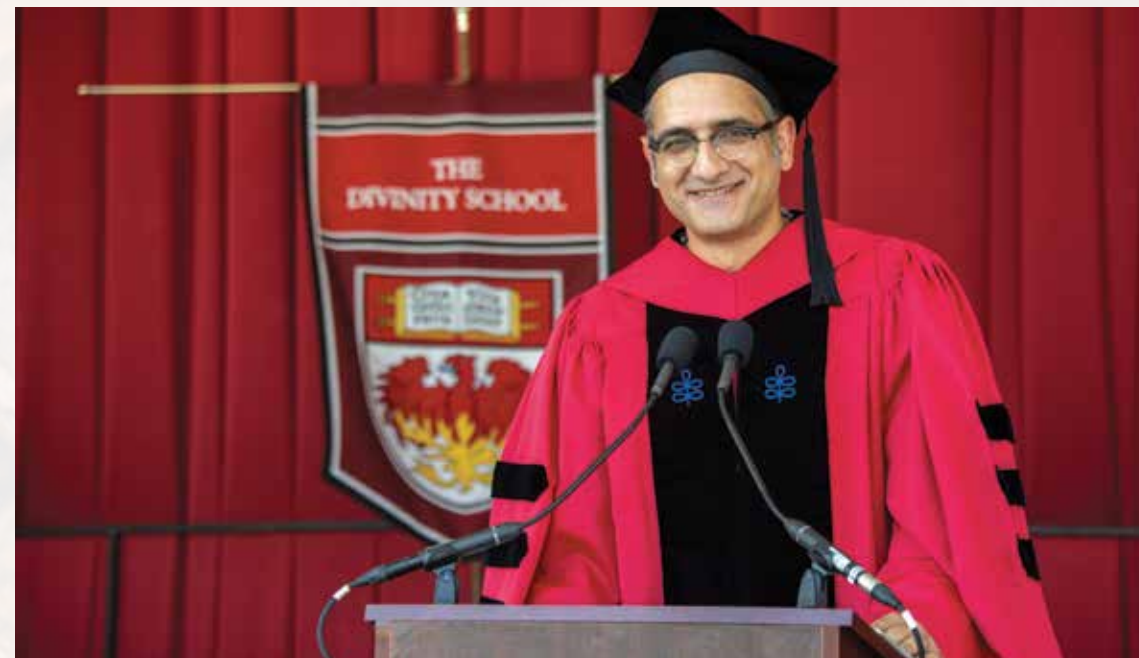
What's the use of studying religion in a time like ours? A time not just of pandemics, but also catastrophic climate change, political turmoil, repression, injustice, and other evils. I often wonder this, as someone who left seemingly more "practical" jobs in engineering and journalism years ago for the academic life. I don't mean to rehash familiar arguments about the value of humanistic inquiry — arguments that I largely agree with. It's religion that specifically concerns me. I have especially pondered the question this past year, amid all the anxiety, the pain, and the strangeness, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. The harder I've thought about it, though, the more I seem to have grown confused. Which is why I decided to bring the question to you all today, not so much to offer inspiration or wisdom, but to think out loud with you in the hopes of gaining some clarity.



Now when I'm confused — not just intellectually baffled, but spiritually unmoored — I sometimes turn to the poetry of the medieval Sufi sage Jalaluddin Rumi. You may know that the Rumi familiar to those who read his work in the original Persian is very different from the Rumi famously described as the "best-selling poet in the United States." The Americanized Rumi is a poet of love, life, and joy — aspects that his Persian-speaking readers also recognize — but he's also the emblem of a saccharine New Agey, feel-good spirituality that makes for nice bumper stickers and Instagram memes but is almost unrecognizable to anyone who has read him in Persian. One of the things I love about the real Rumi is his fierce, dark, no-nonsense humor, his propensity toward the bleak, the morbid, even the raunchy and the scatological.

Listen to this couplet for example, with its medieval post-racial message: "Hindu and Turk, Roman and Abyssinian: All are the same color in the grave." It's not a message you would find on a greeting card.

Or take this insult Rumi hurled at one of his adversaries using the poetic form of a ghazal, a love ode: "If Eve [the mother of humankind] only knew your pretense and tricks — She would sterilize herself to abort your scandal. If you fall into the sea, you hypocrite! You're so ugly no serpent or crocodile will eat you." That's the Rumi I like.



هندو و قفقاق و رومی و حبش      جمله یک رنگ اند اندر گور خوش

*"Hindu and Turk, Roman and Abyssinian: All are the same color in the grave"*

اگر حوا بدانستی ز رنگت      سترون ساختی خود راز ننگت  
اگر دریا درافتی ای منافق      ز زشتی کی خورد مار و نهنگت

*"If Eve [the mother of humankind] only knew your pretense and tricks — She would sterilize herself to abort your scandal. If you fall into the sea, you hypocrite! You're so ugly no serpent or crocodile will eat you."*

Now this same Rumi has a story in Book One of his massive 26,000 verse poem, the Masnavi, where he recounts a conversation between a grammarian and a boatman. I want to focus on this poem today because it has helped me think about the value of religion as a field of study. Here it is as translated by Jawid Mojaddedi:

**Once a grammarian stepped into a boat  
And turned towards the oarsman just to gloat:  
"Have you learned any grammar?" He said, "No."  
"Then half your life's been wasted just to row!"**

**Although this made the oarsman burn with pain  
From answering back he opted to refrain.  
Wind steered the boat towards a whirlpool there—  
The oarsman shouted to him, once aware,  
"Have you learned how to swim and keep afloat?"  
"I've never learned, skilled captain of my boat."  
"Grammarian, your whole life has been in vain:  
We're sinking fast—what good now is your brain!"**

Now if we stop reading here, we might be tempted by a surface-level interpretation of the story: Abstract theoretical knowledge is useless; practical skill is good.



آن یکی نحوی به کشتی در نشست  
گفت هیچ از نحو خواندی گفت لا  
دل شکسته گشت کشتیان ز تاب  
باد کشتی را به گردابی فکند  
گفت کل عمرت ای نحوی فناست  
ز آنک کشتی غرق این گردابهاست

رو به کشتیان نهاد آن خودپرست  
گفت نیم عمر تو شد در فنا  
لیک آن دم کرد خامش از جواب  
گفت کشتیان بدان نحوی بلند  
گفت نی ای خوش جواب خوبره  
ز آنک کشتی غرق این گردابهاست

*From Rumi's Masnavi (first long passage)*

Practical knowledge can save lives; theoretical knowledge is a waste of life. The grammarian in the story can stand for any scholar, including a scholar of religion.

So do we interpret the poem as saying that we're all better off learning to swim than getting advanced degrees in the study of religion? Rumi's message is not so simple. Let's keep reading:

**"Grammarian, your whole life has been in vain:  
We're sinking fast—what good now is your brain!"  
Not grammar but effacement's needed here—  
If self-effaced dive in and have no fear!  
While corpses can float on a stormy sea,  
How can the living find security?  
When you have died to human qualities  
You'll be borne by the sea of mysteries  
He who called others "donkeys" pays the price  
He's now left skidding like an ass on ice!  
Even if you're the scholar of the age,  
Observe the passing of this world, deep sage!  
We've silenced the grammarian in narration  
To teach the grammar of annihilation,  
The law of law and grammar that's most pure  
You'll find through being less, of this be sure.**

It turns out that Rumi's story teaches an explicit ethical lesson steeped in the Sufi worldview. He asks, What is the value for life of scholarly knowledge when what is ultimately needed is the ability to keep afloat in the raging waters of divine reality? His

answer: That academic knowledge isn't worth much if you don't efface your base, lowly self; if you don't strive for union with God.

So what does one do with a didactic lesson like this? And what does it have to do with the value of religion as a field of study? To my mind, Rumi's challenge points toward a question that I think is central to the academic study of religion, and that sets our field apart from most other domains of humanistic and social scientific inquiry. This is an incessant demand that we reflect on the connection between religion as an object of inquiry and religion as a mode of life not only to be studied but also to be lived. The reason this is an incessant question is that there is no definitive response to it, nothing that settles things once and for all. For some scholars, the two are to be kept strictly apart. Others think of them as deeply entwined. Whatever our response might be, we cannot avoid the question itself. For researchers in other fields — astronomers, economists, evolutionary biologists — the question may never arise. Which brings me to another reason this is an incessant challenge: The texts we read, the practices we examine, the people we speak to as we try to grasp what it is to be religious, are not mute artifacts waiting to be coolly dissected, but conscious living beings (or the speech and action of conscious beings) who address us, challenge us, and invite us to join them, to enter their worlds, to live with them, to converse with them.

گفت کل عمرت ای نحوی فناست  
محو می باید نه نحو اینجا بدان  
آب دریا مرده را بر سر نهد  
چون بمردی تو ز اوصاف بشر  
ای که خلقان را تو خر می خوانده ای  
گر تو علامه زمانی در جهان  
مرد نحوی را از آن در دوختیم  
فقه فقه و نحو نحو و صرف صرف

زانک کشتی غرق این گردابهاست  
گر تو محوی بی خطر در آب ران  
ور بود زنده ز دریا کی رهد  
بحر اسرار نهد بر فرق سر  
این زمان چون خر برین یخ مانده ای  
نک فنای این جهان بین وین زمان  
تا شما را نحو محو آموختیم  
در کم آمد یابی ای یار شگرف

*From Rumi's Masnavi (second long passage)*

Rumi's poem about the boatman and the grammarian — indeed his entire oeuvre — is one such living invitation. So how does one respond to his challenge?

One response is to simply ignore it. This is, indeed, the path taken by most scholars who study Rumi's poetry as an object of historical and literary interest: They work not to respond to Rumi, but to explicate his theological and mystical outlook, or situate him within the medieval tradition of Persian Sufism. We don't know if they take up Rumi's challenge in their private spiritual lives, but certainly it's conceivable that they ignore Rumi there too. Clearly there is nothing wrong with this approach: It is the basis of some very excellent scholarship. My point is only that it's a choice: A decision not just to emphasize certain dimensions of a Sufi sage's work at the expense of other aspects, but to tune out the part of his voice that reaches out from the text and touches us, the voice that invites us to think and act a certain way, the voice that calls on us to change ourselves.

A second possible response is the one Rumi himself preferred. It's the response of students and disciples who read and listen to Rumi's poetry as they journey

along the mystical path toward divine union. Whether or not you're a scholar of religion in the Western academic tradition, it's possible to read Rumi and respond to his invitation with a wholehearted "Yes": to dive into the mystical ocean with him and surf the waves.

The third possibility is the one I want to focus on. It is neither an outright refusal nor a fully committed acceptance, but an openness to be touched, to allow







آن مگس بر برگ کاه و بول خر  
گفت من دریا و کشتی خوانده‌ام  
اینک این دریا و این کشتی و من  
بر سر دریا همی راند او عمد  
بود بی حد آن چمین نسبت بدو  
عالمش چندان بود کش بینش است  
صاحب تاویل باطل چون مگس  
گر مگس تاویل بگذارد برای  
آن مگس نبود کش این عبرت بود

همچو کشتیان همی افراشت سر  
مدتی در فکر آن می مانده‌ام  
مرد کشتیان و اهل و رای زن  
می نمودش آن قدر بیرون ز حد  
آن نظر که بیند آن را راست کو  
چشم چندین بحر هم چندینش است  
وهم او بول خر و تصویر خس  
آن مگس را بخت گرداند همای  
روح او نه در خور صورت بود

*From Rumi's Masnavi (last long passage)*

the author's invitation to ring out and resonate, and to make of it what is possible given our distinctive position as people of a particular time and place, each with our complicated relationships (or non-relationships) to existing religious traditions. From this vantage point, several things occur to me: First, Rumi is inviting us not to abandon scholarship, not to stop being grammarians or philologists or theologians or anthropologists or whatever other kind of scholar of religion we are. After all, Rumi himself was not just a mystic and poet, but an Islamic jurist, a theologian, and a teacher. What he is inviting us to do is not to quit being scholars but to guard against scholarship getting to our heads — to make sure we don't become so arrogant as to fail to see the waters raging all around us, to fail to recognize the limits of our knowledge and our abilities.

But Rumi goes further than this: He seems to be saying that scholarship has value only from a vantage point of self-effacement. The full-blown Sufi version of effacement is the annihilation of the self in God, the active subjugation of human wants and desires so that one can become a vessel for the divine. But if Rumi's invitation is to be heard by anyone but the most committed Sufi, perhaps we need to think of his challenge as a demand that we inspect ourselves and ask if what we do and think has any end other than self-indulgence, self-enlargement, self-aggrandizement. Are we animated merely by our own trifling wants, or do we let something greater than us lift us up, suffuse our work, illuminate us, and thereby give light to the world.

For my part, I'm grateful to Rumi for posing this challenge because it has made me see something in our own community, at our own Divinity School, among all of you, that I might have otherwise taken for granted. True, you have all been pursuing impressive, innovative scholarship this past year, and for years before that. And for this you deserve all the congratulations, the honor, and the celebrations. But those of you I know, and I'm sure many of you I don't know, have also been caring for the sick, cooking for the hungry, lending help to the needy, making masks, distributing masks. You've been standing up for justice, raising bail money for the imprisoned, fighting against racism, struggling against structural violence and apartheid. In all these ways, you've allowed something greater than book learning infuse your beings — whether that's compassion,

imagination, courage, spirit, justice, or love — and through this work, you've elevated your learning and helped raise up all of us as a community.

So what does all this say about Rumi and the value of the academic study of religion? One thing it seems to say is the paradoxical message that scholarship is good for articulating its own limits — the limits of human understanding — and thereby for drawing our attention to something that lies around, above, and beyond scholarship, something whose existence can lend passion and purpose to our work, but without which scholarship can become mere foam on the water.

Or maybe not even water. The story I read to you might have us thinking that Rumi still prefers the practical skill of the boatman over the abstract knowledge of the grammarian. But that's not quite right. What he wants to say is that both knowledge and skill are pathetic and useless if they are limited by the confines of our petty wants and our narrow perspectives. In a shorter poem, he compares this narrowness of vision to that of a fly sailing on donkey piss. I'll leave you with the poem, and again, my congratulations:

**A fly in donkey's piss, perched on a straw  
Just like a boatman gazing at the shore  
Said, "straw and piss are my boat and sea,  
I've contemplated this fact recently;  
I'm in the sea, the captain of my boat,  
Following maps and methods learned by rote.'  
In piss it would steer its straw-made raft  
As if in boundless seas, for it was daft:  
It thought a single drop could stretch so far  
Unable to observe things as they are,  
Its world stretched out as far as it could view,  
Small eyes count as a sea a drop or two!  
Narrow interpreters are like this fly,  
With straw and piss they all falsify,  
If you stop reading from your own small view,  
The phoenix will grant kingdoms then to you!  
Still, those who've worked this out aren't really  
flies, Spirits don't correspond to body-size.**

Thank you.

*Alireza Doostdar is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and the Anthropology of Religion and co-director of the Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion.*





# RELIGION: COSMOS, CONSCIENCE, AND COMMUNITY

“The Divinity School is pleased to announce the creation of a new sequence in the College Core titled “Religion: Cosmos, Conscience, and Community.” The new sequence makes it easier for undergraduates to study religious topics in-depth while meeting a requirement for graduation. The sequence is proving to be more popular than anyone anticipated, with five sections in its first year of existence.

The new Core program is really one of the most exciting things we’ve done in many years,” says James Theodore Robinson, Interim Dean of the Divinity School, “The students will be exposed to a very large and various curriculum drawing sources from many, many different historical and religious traditions.”

Every undergraduate student at the University of Chicago takes a yearlong course sequence in the social sciences. In each sequence, students are introduced to key texts in social theory and gain skills in close reading, argumentation, and analysis. Students can choose from eight different sequences. The new sequence is the first to focus specifically on religion and its roles within society.

“Thinking about religion has always been a part of the social sciences at UChicago,” says Russell Johnson, Assistant Director of the Religion Core, “but this is the first sequence centered on how religious narratives and rituals shape people’s perceptions of the world around them.”

Planning for the sequence began over a year ago. Nine faculty members met regularly over Zoom to discuss the central questions and themes that would unite the three quarters. These professors represent an impressive range of areas of expertise, and they work in history, anthropology, cultural theory, ethics, literary studies, gender theory, philosophy, and theology. Over several months, they worked together to develop courses that are more global in their scope than in other Core sequences, assembling texts from ancient China to medieval Spain to contemporary Iran.

In the fall quarter, students look at myths and creation stories, examining how religious narratives simultaneously reflect existing social assumptions and create frameworks through which people understand their lives and communities. In the winter quarter, students look at religious responses to suffering, testing Sigmund Freud’s theory that religion is primarily a matter of “wish-fulfillment.” Finally, in the spring, students discuss the political dimensions of religion, reading selections from Marx, Gandhi, Al-Farabi, and Dorothy Day, among many others. Though students do not need to have any prior knowledge about religion in order to succeed in these courses, students will discuss how the study of religion intersects with fields like psychology, anthropology, and economics.

“One of our central goals in developing the Religion Core,” says Alireza Doostdar, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and the Anthropology of Religion, “has been to help students think about religion in critical terms aided by the methods of the social sciences, but also to get them to see how religious thinking can speak back to, complicate, and revise our social scientific frames of mind.”

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*Thinking about religion has always been a part of the social sciences at UChicago.*

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## UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES



L-R: Prof. Erin Galgay Walsh, Director of the Undergraduate Religious Studies Program; Russell Johnson, Assistant Director of the Undergraduate Religious Studies Program and Core Sequence; and Alexis Wolf (BA'20), MA student and Divinity School area assistant, at the annual College Fair for Majors and Minors.

**O**ur Religious Studies program, offering both a major and a minor, appeals to a wide range of students. Currently under the directorship of Prof. **Erin Galgay Walsh** with support from **Russell Johnson (PhD'19)**, the program engages College students with our faculty and our Teaching Fellows, wrestling with enduring questions about religion and human society.

In the 2016-2017 academic year, we offered 29 Religious Studies (RLST) courses, and 9 of those were dedicated undergraduate courses. This academic year, we're offering 61 Religious Studies courses, and 31 of them are dedicated undergraduate courses. Compared with five years ago, we've doubled the number of RLST courses offered and tripled the number of RLST courses designed specifically for undergraduates.

# 45%

Projected course enrollment  
increase between Autumn  
Quarter and Winter Quarter



"Once I realized I wanted to do religious studies, it all clicked for me. Every class I've taken in the major has been super engaging; every professor is passionate about the material and about students' learning and understanding; it has been an overall amazing experience so far and I look forward to continuing my studies."

**CLARA SANDLER**  
(SECOND-YEAR STUDENT IN THE COLLEGE)

# 80

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE  
RELIGION CORE SEQUENCE  
FOR 2021-2022

### MOST POPULAR RELIGIOUS STUDIES CLASSES THIS ACADEMIC YEAR:

THE PROPHET Q: QANON AND  
NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS  
INTRODUCTION TO BYZANTINE ART  
THE AMERICAN CULTURE WARS  
VILLAINS: EVIL IN PHILOSOPHY,  
RELIGION, AND FILM  
INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT  
RELIGION, MEDICINE, AND THE  
EXPERIENCE OF ILLNESS



# 30%

INCREASE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
MAJORS THIS AUTUMN

# 11

COURSES NEEDED FOR THE  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR





## Divinity School Teaching Fellows 2021-2022

Our **Teaching Fellows program**, which offers recent graduates the opportunity to continue to develop their research and teaching at the School for up to two years, continues to grow. Fellows work under the mentorship of a faculty colleague, and within a pedagogical community of practice. This year's new fellows join their colleagues in developing and offering a range of new courses aimed at the UChicago College population.

**GREG CHATTERLEY**

**FRANCESCA CHUBB-CONFER**

**EMILY D. CREWS**

**MARSHALL CUNNINGHAM**

**MAUREEN KELLY**

**MARK LAMBERT**

**YIFTACH OFEK**

**YONATAN SHEMESH**

**CHRISTINE TROTTER**

**MATTHEW VANDERPOEL**

**RAÚL E. ZEGARRA-MEDINA**

**Dr. Audrey Truschke** @AudreyTruschke · 19h  
Your friendly prof here, modeling a new shirt.

I'm a proud member of @UChiDivinity school's first undergraduate cohort of Religious Studies majors, back in 2004.

The books are some of the first I read in the field of religious studies, in fall 2000, in Swift Hall. #UChicagoRLST



Audrey Truschke (AB'04, Religious Studies) is Associate Professor of South Asian History at Rutgers University. She tweeted these photographs taken by her talented 7-year-old daughter Marguerite. You too can find us on Twitter at @UChiDivinity



"With a focus on religion and medicine, my work is naturally situated at the borderlands between the humanities and the sciences. By teaching in the Social Sciences Core, the Teaching Fellows program has provided invaluable experience working with students across disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, the opportunity to craft my own RLST courses has enabled me to expand my research interests in exciting new directions while also capitalizing upon the curricular possibilities afforded by the city of Chicago."

**MARK LAMBERT (PHD'21)**



"I've enjoyed the creativity that UChicago undergrads bring to the classroom. I've been surprised by how often one of my students comes up with a reading that I hadn't anticipated and this becomes the subject of our class conversation. As far as Religious Studies is concerned, I've appreciated how willing students have been to buy into a critical approach to traditionally authoritative texts. We typically read our course materials in ways that are quite different from what these students are used to. This can lead to some pushback. However, by and large our students at Chicago are able to shift their approaches in order to participate in the kinds of conversations we're looking to have in a Religious Studies classroom."

**MARSHALL CUNNINGHAM (PHD'21)**



**JANUARY 2022**  
Edith Wharton  
*The House of Mirth*  
(1905)

**FEBRUARY**  
Booth Tarkington  
*The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918)

**MARCH**  
Willa Cather  
*Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927)

**APRIL**  
William Faulkner  
*As I Lay Dying* (1930)

**MAY**  
John Steinbeck  
*The Grapes of Wrath*  
(1939)

**SUMMER HIATUS**

**SEPTEMBER**  
Robert Penn Warren  
*All the King's Men*  
(1946)

**OCTOBER**  
Ralph Ellison  
*Invisible Man* (1952)

**NOVEMBER**  
Walker Percy  
*The Moviegoer* (1961)

**DECEMBER**  
John Updike  
*Rabbit Redux* (1971)

**JANUARY 2023**  
Toni Morrison  
*Beloved* (1987)

**FEBRUARY**  
Philip Roth  
*The Human Stain*  
(1998)

# Religion in/at/around Great American Novels The 20th Century

AN OPEN SEMINAR FOR UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DIVINITY SCHOOL ALUMNI

**B**eginning in January 2022 and extending through February 2023, the Divinity School is pleased to offer alumni an open seminar with Professor Richard A. Rosengarten.

Imagining membership as a community of readers willing to “stay the course,” the seminar will meet monthly (over Zoom) to read together and to discuss a “Great American Novel” from each decade of the 20th century — excepting the 1930s, for which members will read two.

As formulated (however briefly) by John DeForest immediately following the Civil War, the idea of a “great American novel” was aspiration: it was something America needed, an identifying marker akin to, e.g., the Homeric epics for Greek civilization. For all its brevity and generality DeForest’s formulation has had an enduring if uneven and at times uneasy standing in American

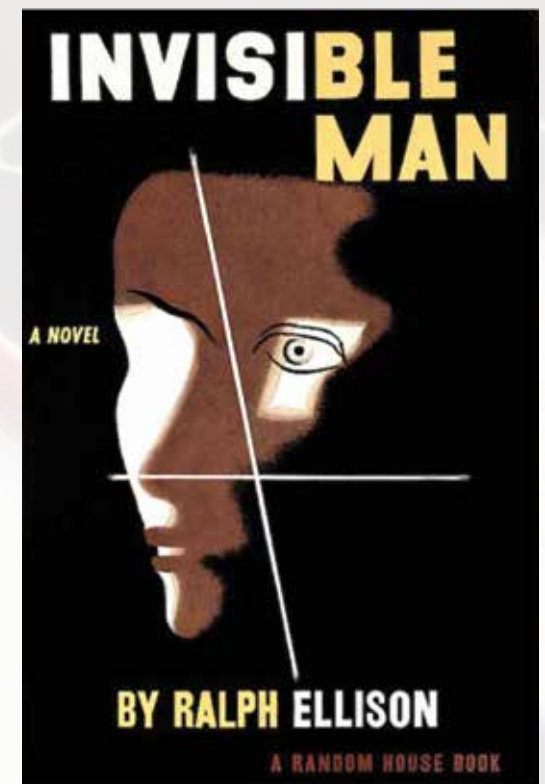
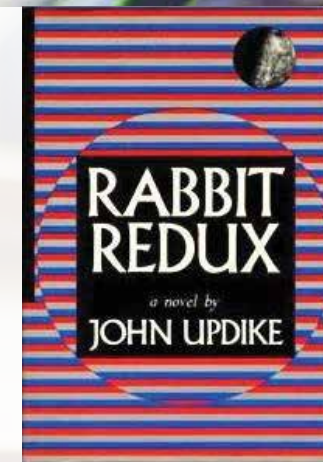
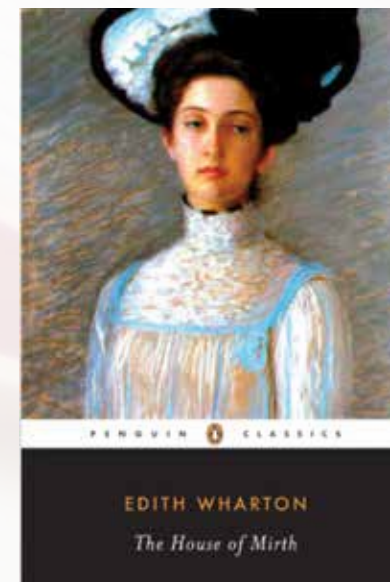
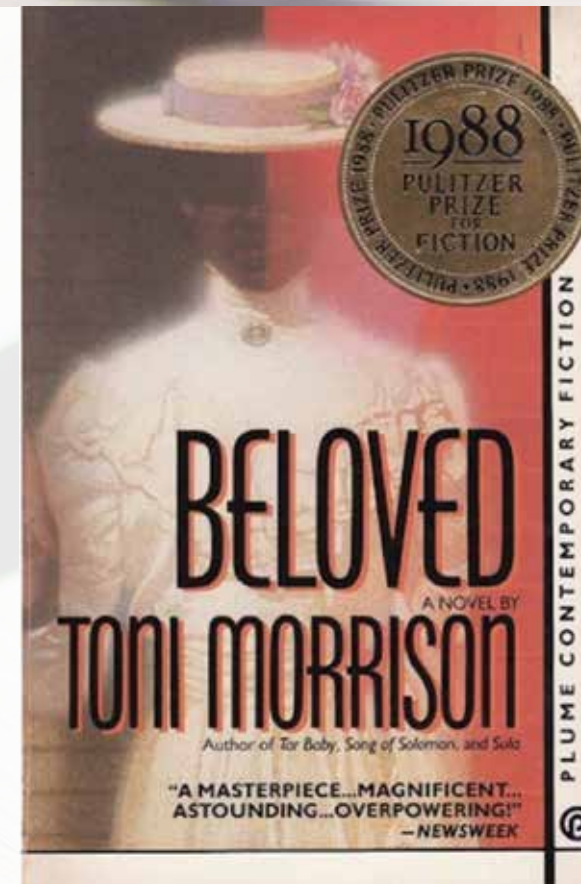
culture. Novelists and critics alike have embraced and debunked the aspiration. Few have ignored it.

Just as the Homeric epics spoke of the Greek deities, so do the novels on this list address, in a range of ways, the formulation and place of a (usually, but not always) Christian God in American life. We’ll be alert to these aspects of the novels, at times overt and at times covert but always present.

Sessions will be 1.5 hours, conducted via Zoom. The day prior to each session, the discussion leader will circulate to participants a 1-2 page introduction summarizing the reception of the novel in the decade of its writing and posing a general question for the group’s consideration.

Participants will first read the novel and then (only then...) this brief introduction. After brief greetings, the group will be sorted into “breakout rooms” in which groups of 2-3 meet for 20 minutes to discuss the posed general question, and to raise other questions they’d like to discuss. The full group will then reconvene to share their thoughts and to engage in seminar-style conversation about the novel.

*Richard Rosengarten*  
(MA’87, PhD’94),  
*Associate Professor of Religion*  
*and Literature, studies*  
*Enlightenment thought*  
*and its import for religious*  
*thought and practice.*  
*Email Prof. Rosengarten*  
*at [raroseng@uchicago.edu](mailto:raroseng@uchicago.edu)*  
*with your interest!*







## IN MEMORIAM

### MICHAEL MURRIN (1938-2021)

**M**ichael Murrin, the Raymond W. & Martha Hilpert Gruner Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in the Departments of English,

Comparative Literature, and the Divinity School, died on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, at the age of 83.

Professor Murrin joined the University of Chicago in 1965 as an Assistant Professor and retired in 2013, having established himself as a leading authority on Western epic, allegory, and romance. He was a beloved teacher as well as scholar; he won the University's Quantrell Award for undergraduate teaching in 1967 and the Alumni Association's Norman MacLean Faculty Award in 2016 (bestowed for extraordinary contributions to teaching and student experiences). A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a Guggenheim Fellow, Professor Murrin published four highly influential, field-changing books (all with the University of Chicago Press). His last book, *Trade and Romance* (2013), won the American Comparative Literature Association's René Wellek Prize. He is widely remembered for his kindness, his respect for colleagues and students alike, his patience, his generosity, and his wry sense of humor.

## ESSAY CONTEST ON RACE AND RELIGION (2021)

The Divinity School is pleased to announce the winners of our [Race and Religion Essay Contest](#). We received many excellent submissions and are grateful for the time and care applicants spent in submitting their work.

### FIRST PLACE

"The Archbishop Wears Prada: Heavenly Bodies & Catholicism's Racial Imagination"

[Alexia V. Williams](#)

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

### SECOND PLACE

"Racializing Islam Through Humor"

[Samah Choudhury](#)

Ithaca College

**THIRD PLACE:** "De casu angelorum: Damnation as a Political-Theological Problematic"

[Sean Capener](#)

University of Toronto, Mississauga



The Divinity School recognizes student achievements through a variety of prizes.

Please visit [divinity.uchicago.edu/our-community/current-students/prizes](https://divinity.uchicago.edu/our-community/current-students/prizes) to learn more.

The Divinity School is pleased to announce the following awards and prizes.



**BRIË LOSKOTA**, the Executive Director of the Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion, has been awarded a 2021 Trailblazer Award from NewGround: A Muslim-Jewish Partnership for Change, for her leadership in forging relationships across the widest and most fractious divides.



**WILLEMIE OTTEN**, the Dorothy Grant Maclear Professor of Theology and the History of Christianity, will deliver the (postponed) 2020 Etienne Gilson Lecture at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, an institute for advanced studies in the intellectual and material cultures of the middle ages. Each academic year

the Institute invites a senior medievalist to give the lecture, established in honor of the Institute's founder.

Professor Otten's work in the history of Christianity and Christian thought focuses on the medieval and early Christian intellectual tradition, especially in the West, and an emphasis on the continuity of Platonic themes. She analyzes (early) medieval thought and theology as an amalgam of biblical, classical, and patristic influences which, woven together, constitute their own intellectual matrix.



**MATTHEW VEGA** was awarded one of 12 inaugural Diversity Advisory Board (DAB) Awards honoring student efforts to drive change. These awards were granted to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to diversity and inclusion efforts at the University of Chicago.

Vega, a PhD student in Theology and a Hanna Holborn Gray Fellow, organizes initiatives around racial, gender and class justice. Vega co-designed an abolition reading group that brought together faculty, students, and community members to think critically about the relationship between prisons and justice; that group transformed into the Racial Capitalism Reading Group. While a leader of the Theology Club, he co-organized events on liberation theologians in the United States and Latin America, generating public interest around the relationship between race, class, and religion. Vega also helped moderate the event Freedom Dreams, organized with UChicago Spiritual Life and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.



Teaching Fellow in the Divinity School and the College **RAÚL ZEGARRA-MEDINA** (PhD'20) has been awarded a 2021 Manfred Lautenschlaeger Award for Theological Promise from The Research Center for International and Interdisciplinary Theology (FIIT) at The University of Heidelberg. He is working on a book manuscript

provisionally entitled "The Revolution of Tradition: A Reinterpretation of Liberation Theology," which advances an interdisciplinary interpretation of liberation theology that underscores its revolutionary approach to the question of social justice.

# 58

## New Students in Autumn 2021:

27 MA  
3 AMRS  
16 MDiv  
12 PhD

# 63

## Graduates for Spring 2021

41 MA  
2 AMRS  
14 MDiv  
6 PHD

# 22

## Graduates for Summer 2021

5 MA  
3 AMRS  
3 MDiv  
11 PHD

# 11

## Teaching Fellows in the 2021-2022 academic year



## SWIFT ONLINE

Visit our YouTube channel ([bit.ly/DivinityVideo](https://bit.ly/DivinityVideo)) for these videos and more.



**AN EVENING WITH REBECCA DAVIS**  
JOIN US VIA LIVESTREAM  
ON FEBRUARY 10, 2022, AT 5PM.

Sponsored by the Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion, this event will bring together author and scholar Rebecca Davis in conversation with Assistant Professor and historian of American religion William Schultz.

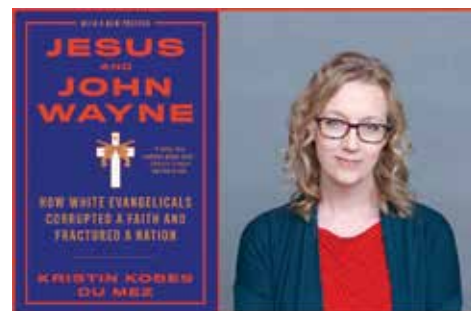
The new faiths of notable public figures riveted the American public in the decades after World War II. Unconventional religious choices charted new ways of declaring an “authentic” identity amid escalating Cold War fears of brainwashing and coercion and provoked wide-ranging conversations — and controversies — that ultimately transformed American politics.

Rebecca L. Davis is the Miller Family Endowed Early Career Professor of History at the University of Delaware, where she holds a joint appointment in the Department of Women and Gender Studies. Her research focuses on the intersecting histories of sexuality, religion, and 20th century American culture.

For more information, visit [divinity.uchicago.edu/rdavis](https://divinity.uchicago.edu/rdavis)

**WE ARE PLEASED TO SHARE  
A CONVERSATION WITH  
2021'S ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR,  
RABBI JOSEPH EDELHEIT, DMN'01.**

In a wide-ranging interview conducted by Rob Wilson-Black, AM'92, PhD'02, CEO of Sojourners and Alumni Council Chair, Rabbi Edelheit shares his convictions about taking academics into the classroom, his work on HIV-AIDS relief, and a career dedicated to confronting anti-Semitism in his community.



**AN EVENING WITH KRISTIN DU MEZ**  
WATCH THE VIDEO OF OUR  
NOVEMBER 16TH EVENT BRINGING  
TOGETHER KRISTIN DU MEZ WITH  
BRIE LOSKOTA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF THE MARTY CENTER.

Kristin Kobes Du Mez, Professor of History at Calvin College, focuses on the intersection of gender, religion, and politics in recent American history. She is the author of *A New Gospel for Women* and the *New York Times* bestselling *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*.



This image is the 17th-century Flemish tapestry recently gifted to the Divinity School by Lili Gaubin. It hangs on the south wall of the Lecture Hall. The cover shows a detail.



