Stay up-to-date with news at the Divinity School: bookmark our website at divinity.uchicago.edu, find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and sign up for our weekly email on public events in Swift Hall.
The Enhancing Life Project

Last year, seven Divinity School alumni were awarded two-year grants to conduct research in a cutting-edge new field: enhancing life. The Enhancing Life Project, supported with a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation and led by William Schweiker (PhD, 85), the Edward L. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor at the Divinity School, and Günter Thomas, professor of theology at Ruhr-University Bochum, brings together 35 scholars from around the world and across a wide range of disciplines to study the essential aspirations of human beings. During the grant period, the scholars gather for three, two-week residency seminars that will allow for collaboration and the exchange of ideas across disciplinary boundaries. They will each write a major monograph and teach two courses on enhancing life.

We asked them to talk about the ways that their work for The Enhancing Life Project was influenced by their time at the Divinity School; their answers (and photos) can be seen at http://divinity.uchicago.edu/enhancing-life-scholars.

Senior Fellows

Maliha Chishti (PhD, University of Toronto) teaches at the Chang School/Sociology Department at Ryerson University, Toronto Canada. She is the former Director of the Hague Appeal for Peace at the United Nations and helped initiate the Historic Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

At the Marty Center, Prof. Chishti intends to further her research on the opportunities and challenges to peacebuilding in Muslim-majority contexts, focusing on the role of religion, traditional authority and the politics of multivocality and pluralism in post-conflict contexts.” She is currently working on her manuscript, “Decolonizing Peacebuilding” and has published numerous articles on Afghan women, peace and conflict.

Prof. Massimo Nardello (PhD, Gregorian University, Roma) is Professor of Systematic Theology in the Inter-Diocesan Theological Institute, Professor of Systematic Theology in the High Institute of Religious Studies (Modena), and contract professor of systematic theology in the Faculty of Theology, Bologna. His current research involves process theology within the Catholic tradition. He writes that his aim as a senior fellow “will be to sketch an initial reinterpretation of process theology in the wake of process thinkers like A. N. Whitehead, J. Cobb and J. Bracken, and then to ground within its framework a positive understanding of the Christian doctrinal development.”

Junior Fellows

Chloe Blackshear
Department of Comparative Literature

Marshall Cunningham
Bible

Cameron Ferguson
Bible

W. Ezekiel Goggin
Philosophy of Religions

Aaron Holland
Theology

Elisa Jones
Department of History

Michael Le Chevallier
Religious Ethics

Ekaterina Lomperis
Theology

Katherine Mershon
Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

Robert J. Porwell
History of Christianity

Jonathan Soyars
New Testament and Early Christian Literature (Humanities)

The Marty Center, under the direction of Wendy Doniger (right), continues its emphasis on global interactions and aspects of religion. The Center welcomes eleven dissertation, or junior fellows, and two senior fellows during the 2016-2017 academic year.

The dissertation seminar, offered in two sections, is being led by Professors Ryan Coyne and Angie Heo. The seminar is designed to advance interdisciplinary research.

Read more about our Fellows present and past at https://divinity.uchicago.edu/marty-center-fellows.

Craft of Teaching Update

The Craft of Teaching, the Divinity School’s program of pedagogical development for its graduate students, is dedicated to preparing a new generation of accomplished educators in the field of religious studies. Coming up on its fifth year, the program continues to offer unique programming within and beyond Swift Hall.

The flagstone seminar, our quarterly Dean’s Seminar on the Craft of Teaching, invites an alumnus to craft a seminar for current students, centered on issues of course design and institutional contexts. In Autumn the seminar was delivered by Mark I. Wallace (PhD’86), Professor of Religion at Swarthmore College, in a seminar entitled “Religion, Ecology, and Institutional Citizenship in the Anthropocene Era.” In the Winter Quarter Daisy Machado (PhD’96), Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary, delivered “Pedagogy and the Public Intellectual.” Our 2017 Alumnus of the Year, John Corrigan, will deliver the Spring seminar.

For the 2016–2017 academic year, five Divinity School-trained educators were invited to provide their unique insights as faculty members. Our Bloggers in Virtual Residence engage with some of the topics addressed by this year’s programming at https://craftofteachingreligion.wordpress.com/. Join the conversation!
Brett Colasacco is the Managing Editor of Sightings. Colasacco is currently a PhD candidate in Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture. He graduated from the College in 2007 with a major in Religion and the Humanities and received his MDiv from the Divinity School in 2010. He was a 2015–2016 Martin Marty Center Junior Fellow.

Colasacco’s main research interests concern the dynamics of religion and secularity in modern literature, with a focus on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Anglo-American and continental European modernism and the avant-garde; and fascism, totalitarianism, and political religions. His dissertation explores the intersection of these themes through the writings of the California poet and dramatist Robinson Jeffers.

Colasacco brings to Sightings considerable experience speaking to, and writing for, diverse audiences about religion and its relations to public life. He has taught both in the College and in the Divinity School’s ministry program.

Colasacco previously worked at Rockefeller Chapel, where he taught adult Christian education classes, led community discussion forums, and delivered sermons to an interdenominational congregation. He has made a habit of presenting on religious topics at academic conferences where scholars rarely engage deeply with religion. Along these lines, he recently organized and moderated a panel for the American Literature Association Conference. Colasacco’s work has appeared in the journal Politics, Religion & Ideology.

Of the position, Colasacco says: “I am truly honored by this opportunity and excited to advance the aims of Sightings and the Marty Center. I hope to cultivate columns that offer novel—sometimes provocative—perspectives, and which ‘sight’ religion in unexpected places. We will especially be seeking out ways in which the study of religion might contribute to a fuller and richer understanding of our wider social, cultural, and political climate.”

Keep up with the current Divinity Students Association on their webpage: http://dsa.uchicago.edu

An aspiring American religious historian, Brown studies race and religion in modern America, and his current research focuses on the history of black social Christianity in the urban North.

Of the position, Brown says, “I am honored and thrilled to continue the Forum’s tradition of publishing thought-provoking issues that investigate the many and varied intersections of religion with broader themes, problems, and events in global cultures. My vision for this next phase of the Forum is to host scholarly dialogues and publish long-form essays that do more than simply highlight the presence of religion in world cultures; but instead help to shape the inter/national conversation about religion’s role in these affairs by investigating the nuance often lost in the turning of news cycles.”
Dean of Students Report

This Fall, the Divinity School enrolled 302 entering degree candidates: 86 MA, 8 AMRS, 48 MDiv, and 160 PhD, as well as 6 non-degree-seeking students.

College Graduates in Religious Studies

Four students completed fourth-year BA papers in Religious Studies this year, led by the BA paper preceptor, Sean Hannan. They and their topics are (advisers’ names follow in brackets):


Emma Koch, “Burn Down the Mission: Contextual Mission in a Church without Walls.” (Lindner)

Nicholas Posegay, “To Belabor the Points: The Influence of Arabic on Babylonian Vocalization.” (Robinson, and Donner in NELC)


Conversions

The 526th Convocation Winter 2016

MDiv

G. Abbas Chinoy

MA

Samantha Claire Dunne

Shandra Eugenie Lamaute

PhD

Timothy Mark Hiller

“Justification and Moral Value: Martin Luther on Good, Evil, and the Moral Self”

Richard Jerold Hoskins

“Reinhold Niebuhr and International Society: The Concord of Christian Realism and the English School of International Relations Theory”

Kyle Gordon Rader

“Learning to Love: A Constructive Theology of Aesthetic Reading from I John to Ernst Troeltsch”

The 527th Convocation Spring 2016

MDiv

Sarah Freeman Beck

Robin Danielle Cox

Meghan Anne Freytag

Benjamin Lewis Garrett

Lawrence S. Green

Ellen Havdala

Marcus Christian Lehmann

Adam Patrick Spencer

MA

Caroline Elizabeth Anglim

Ryan Stuart Bingham

Rachel Carbonara

Anson Cohen Mizrahi

Carl Dao

Jennifer Anne Frary

Heena Haiderali

Laurel Andrea Harig

Yeong-Goang Heo

Kelly M. Holub

Brian Joseph Hughes

Nisheeta Jagtiana

Allison Leigh Kanner

Casey Lynne Kapalko

Menachem Mendel Kranz

Patrick Georges Lambelet

Seth Alston Michael

Thomas Henry Owings

Nathan David Pederson

Kelsey Ann Peterson

Matthew John Peterson

Casey Lynne Kapalko

Menachem Mendel Kranz

Patrick Georgs Lambelet

Vinicius Marinho

Seth Alston Michael

Zahra Moien Meybodi

William Rainey Harper Fellowship 2016—2017

Kenneth W. Yu

Provost Dissertation Fellowship

Alison Tyner Davis

FLAS/Title VI Fellowship Summer

Marielle Burr Harrison

Andrew Louis Katzenstein

FLAS Academic Year

Erin Mary Atwell

Jahnabi Barooah

Derek Michael Bayon

Zoe Woodnury High

Viraj Ranjanika Patel

Samantha Leigh Pellegrino

Tzvi Hirsch Schoenbrin

Robert N.H. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies/ACLS Dissertation Fellowship

Justin W. Henry

Alexander Hsu

Buechnew Ministry Writing Prize

Luke Allgeyer

Prizes and Fellowships

PhD

Justin R. Howell


Philippa Rose Koch

“Persistent Providence: Healing the Body and Soul in Early America”

Evan Francis Kuehn

“Troeltsch’s Eschatological Absolute”

Charles Scott Preston

“Writing a More ‘Sanskrit’ India: Religion, Culture, and Politics in V. Raghavan’s Twentieth-Century Sanskrit Literature”

FLAS/Title VI Fellowship Summer

Marielle Burr Harrison

Andrew Louis Katzenstein

FLAS Academic Year

Erin Mary Atwell

Jahnabi Barooah

Derek Michael Bayon

Zoe Woodnury High

Viraj Ranjanika Patel

Samantha Leigh Pellegrino

Tzvi Hirsch Schoenbrin

Robert N.H. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies/ACLS Dissertation Fellowship

Justin W. Henry

Alexander Hsu

Buechnew Ministry Writing Prize

Luke Allgeyer
The Divinity School benefits from the generous support of alumni, friends, and organizations. The faculty, staff, and students of the Divinity School extend their sincere thanks to all who contributed during the 2015–2016 fiscal year. (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016)