Friday Bulletin, August 30, 2013

Department of Religion, University of Florida

Upcoming Events

Professor Dan Kahan (Yale University) will give a talk on “‘Civil’ Society? On the Future Prospects of Meaningful Dialogue” on September 11, 2013, at 5:30 pm in Smathers Library (East), IA. Dr. Kahan is the Elizabeth K. Dollard Professor of Law and Professor of Psychology at Yale Law School. He is a member of the Cultural Cognition Project, an interdisciplinary team of scholars who use empirical methods to examine the impact of group values on perceptions of risk and on science communication. This event is part of a series of six lectures organized by the UF Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere to examine the obstacles and opportunities for constructive public dialogue on pressing political issues. It is sponsored by the Rothman Endowment at the Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere in CLAS, with co-sponsorship from the UF Libraries, the Honors Program, the Department of History, the Department of English, the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, and the Office of Sustainability.

Cynthia Packert, Christian A. Johnson Professor, and Chair of the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Middlebury College, will give a lecture on “‘The Lord’s Own Temple-Museum’: Memory, Myth, and Monuments in Swaminarayan Hinduism.” It will take place at the Harn Museum on October 19, 2013, at 3:00 pm. In this richly illustrated lecture, Dr. Packert will discuss the significance of a recently-established museum in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, dedicated to the memory and glorification of a religious leader and social reformer known as Sahajanand Swami – AKA “Lord [Bhagwan] Swaminarayan” – who in the late 18th and early 19th century, had a significant positive social and religious impact in the state of Gujarat. She will review the early history of the art and architecture of the Swaminarayan sect, and will examine the contemporary importance of preserving Lord Swaminarayan’s memory in a museum setting. Her talk is being given under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra).

Cynthia Packert (Middlebury College) will hold an informal meeting with graduate students on Friday, October 18, 2013, from 3:00-4:30 pm, in Anderson Room 117. She teaches courses on all aspects of Asian art, with a particular focus on India, while her research focuses on the visual culture of Hinduism. She is the author of The Sculpture of Medieval Rajasthan (E.J. Brill, 1997) and The Art of Loving Krishna: Ornamentation and Devotion (Indiana University Press, 2010), along with several articles on Indian art and iconography. Her current project focuses on new Hindu temples in India and the North American diaspora, with special attention on the BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu community. She is also working on a collaborative museum exhibition project entitled “Global Ganesha: Temple, Market and Museum.”

Other Lectures
Presentation by Norman Wirzba (Duke Divinity): September 19, 2013
Presentations by Yoram Bilu (Psychology – Hebrew University): Week of September 23, 2013
Lecture and workshop by Daniel Levine (Political Science – Michigan): Week of November 4, 2013
News

MA student, Alysia Radder, was the recipient of a competitive student scholarship for the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS) 2013 summer conference. The theme of this year's conference was "Scientific, Spiritual and Moral Challenges in Solving the World Food Crisis" and was held at the Silver Bay Conference Center on Lake George, NY, July 27 - August 3, 2013. She was also selected to present her thesis research on the gastro-theology of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition during two afternoon poster sessions at the conference. Her poster can be viewed on the conference website here: http://irasconference.com/about/poster-presentations/. Congratulations, Alysia!

Bhakti Mamtora (PhD, Asia) was one of fifteen students who attended the American Institute for Indian Studies (AIIS) Sanskrit language program, June - August 2013. This intensive program enhanced her comprehension of the language by exposing her to a variety of Sanskrit genres through oral and textual mediums. Congratulations, Bhakti!

Presentations

The Archeology of Bhakti  http://www.efeo.fr/base.php?code=775
The École française d'Extrême-Orient and the Centre national de la recherche scientifique in France conducted the Archaeology of Bhakti Workshop and Conference at the École française d'Extrême-Orient in Pondicherry, India, July 31-August 13, 2013. The French hosts invited Professor Vasudha Narayanan as a “guest of honour” to this workshop and conference. The workshop began with Dr. Narayanan giving a talk entitled “Reclining, Standing, and Abiding: Vishnu in Temple Arts and in Devotees' Hearts.”

Bhakti Mamtora (PhD, Asia) and Caleb Simmons (PhD, Asia) were two of a very small number of graduate students chosen to attend the sessions. The workshop provided both Bhakti and Caleb the opportunity to engage with world-renowned professors from a variety of disciplines. On August 12, 2013, Caleb presented a paper titled "Creating Royalty: Identity-making and bhakti vigrahas of the Wodeyars of Mysore." The workshop culminated in a two-day conference on August 12-13, 2013, which commenced with a presentation by Dr. Vasudha Narayanan titled, "Carving Viṣṇu, Creating Vaikuṇṭha: Continuities and Ruptures between Kanchi and Kambuja."

Professor Vasudha Narayanan was invited to give a talk at the Chautauqua Institution, NY, this summer. Her talk on July 24, 2013 was entitled, “Enduring Happiness for Now, Enduring Happiness for Good: Some Hindu Perspectives.”


Professor Bron Taylor’s invited presentation, “Dangerous Territory: The Contested Perceptual Spaces Between Imperial Conservation and Environmental Justice,” was given at the Edges of
Environmental History workshop, which inaugurated the 7th Biennial European Society for Environmental History Association conference, in Munich, Germany, August 2013. The papers are being worked up for a book to be published and presented to the World Congress on Environmental History next summer in Portugal. Event information: http://eseh2013.org/the-edges-of-environmental-history-workshop.html

Professor Terje Ostebo gave a talk on August 23, 2013 entitled "The Religious Landscape in Ethiopia" at the Executive Analytical Exchange on Ethiopia - Briefing of the new U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia. The event was organized by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the U.S. Department of State and the National Intelligence Council, Washington, DC.

Professor Terje Ostebo delivered the keynote address "The Growth of Salafism in Africa" on August 29, 2013 in Oslo, Norway, at the International Law and Policy Institute's launching conference of its Center for African Studies.

On August 22, 2013, Professor Mario Poceski presented a paper titled “The Development of Monastic Codes in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” at “Vinaya Texts and Transmission History: New Perspectives and New Methods,” an international conference held in Hangzhou, China. He also served as a discussant for a panel on the “Vinaya in interaction with Chan, Tendai and Shingon Buddhism.”

Publications

Information about the book is available at the publisher's website: http://www.berghahnbooks.com/title.php?rowtag=TragardhCivil

Deadlines

The applications for Fall 2013 Travel Support for Graduate Students, for the period September 1 – December 31, 2013, are due in the Dean’s office by 4:00 pm on Tuesday, September 10. The application is available on the web at http://www.clas.ufl.edu/forms/travel_grad.pdf. Since the graduate studies committee will have to evaluate and rank the applications before forwarding them to CLAS, please submit a copy of your application by email to Annie by 4:30 PM, Friday, September 6. The department also offers matching support. In order to apply for these funds, you will need to have applied for support from CLAS, International Studies, GSA, or any other external source. The application for departmental travel funds can be found at http://sites.clas.ufl.edu/religion/files/Religion_Travel_Support_Application.pdf
Please submit this application by email to Annie by Monday, September 16, at 4pm.