

# Friday Bulletin, November 7, 2014

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*Department of Religion, University of Florida*

## News and Upcoming Events

This year's **Native American Heritage Month's** events include two speakers on Wednesday and Friday the 12th and 14th of November, 2014. The first is **Kristin Szczepaniec**, of the "Teach for America Native American Alliance Initiative," who will speak at the Native American Heritage Luncheon, on Wednesday, November 12, 11:45-12:45pm in Anderson Hall 117. This event is an opportunity for our community at the University of Florida – undergraduate, graduate, faculty, and staff – to meet and learn more about the issue of education as it impacts Native students. Join us for a conversation on the complexity of education for our American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students in both rural and urban areas. Come out to this event to grab lunch and learn more about the power of Native leaders and how we can work together to change the narrative for Native communities. If you are also interested in scheduling a one-on-one meeting with Kristin, email her directly ([Kristin.szczepaniec@teachforamerica.org](mailto:Kristin.szczepaniec@teachforamerica.org)) by November 10th.

The second presentation is by **Marcus Briggs-Cloud**, Maskoke Nation, UFL, who will speak on "Liberation Theology & Indigenous Gender Epistemology" on Friday, November 14, 2014, at 3:00-4:00pm, in Little Hall 113. In his talk, Marcus will argue that the current manifestations of female subjugation and homophobia are NOT traditional Indigenous Maskoke concepts. Through colonization and its Christian missionization apparatus, patriarchy and heteronormativity have unequivocally become infectious within many Indigenous societies today. Under a liberation theology rubric, Marcus Briggs-Cloud argues that critical analysis of the Maskoke language reveals a traditional worldview of inclusivity that challenges gender and queer violence and summons traditional and Christian Indigenous practitioners alike to a contemporary social justice agenda that combats oppression of women and queer peoples.

The **Center for Global Islamic Studies** is organizing a public lecture on Thursday, November 13, 2014, at 5:30pm in 120 Pugh Hall. The speaker is Dr. **Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im**, Emory University. His talk is entitled "Religious Belief Requires the Possibility of Disbelief: Tolerant Public Space is an Islamic Imperative." Dr. An-Na'im is the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law, associate professor in the Emory College of Arts and Sciences, and Senior Fellow of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion of Emory University. He is an internationally recognized scholar of Islam and human rights and human rights in cross-cultural perspectives. His research interests include constitutionalism in Islamic and African countries, secularism, and Islam and politics. For more details, see <http://globalislam.center.ufl.edu/lecture-series/>.

Our department's first **Graduate Student Conference**, entitled "Religion and Culture in the Digital Age," will be held on January 24, 2015. We will have several grad student presenters from our department as well as a few from out of state. Following the students' panels, we will have a roundtable discussion with Dr. **David Morgan** from Duke University, Dr. **Stewart Hoover** from the University of Colorado, Dr. **Sid Dorbin** from UF's English department, and

Dr. **Dragan Kujundzic** from UF's Center for Jewish Studies. The Office of Research has awarded the graduate students \$1000 in support of this graduate conference!

## News

**Phillip Green** (PhD candidate, Asia) successfully defended his dissertation on Wednesday, November 5, 2014. His dissertation is titled "The Vat Sithor Inscription: Translation, Commentary, and Reflections on Buddhist Traditions in Tenth-Century Cambodia." The primary contribution is an English translation of the Sanskrit Vat Sithor stele inscription. His examination of this inscription, along with a comparative analysis of other contemporary tenth-century epigraphical and art historical sources from Cambodia, demonstrates that Buddhist traditions during this period exhibited the following characteristics: (1) the doctrinal and epistemological foundations of tenth-century Buddhists were primarily grounded in Yogācāra thought and emphasized the path of the bodhisattva, (2) evidence of newly arising tantric Buddhist elements first appeared in Cambodia during this period and were beginning to be adapted to these Yogācāra foundations, (3) triadic configurations of Buddhist figures are dominant, with triads including the Buddha and Avalokiteśvara being the most prevalent, (4) on the ground Buddhist practices that revolved around the acquisition of merit (such as image construction and gift-giving) constituted the most visible and dominant form of Buddhist expression and practice, and finally (5) Buddhist monastic positions are sometimes expressed through a rhetoric of Buddhist and Brahmanical rivalry. Phillip's committee included: Dr. **Vasudha Narayanan** (Chair), Dr. **Jason Neelis** (Co-Chair) of Wilfrid Laurier University, and members Dr. **Whitney Sanford** and Dr. **Michael Binford** of the University of Florida, and Dr. **Hiram Woodward**, former curator of Asian Art at the Walters Art Museum. The article, "The Many Faces of Lokeshvara: Tantric Connections in Cambodia and Campa between the Tenth and Thirteenth Centuries," represents a portion of Phillip's research and was recently published in the *History of Religions* journal this past August. Congratulations, Dr. Green!

**Sarah Werner** (PhD candidate, Nature) has been awarded a CLAS Dissertation Fellowship funded by the Maurice C. Holmes and Frances A. Holmes Endowed Fellowship for the Summer 2015 term. She is studying environmental practices of Mennonites in North America. Her dissertation committee members are Dr. **Anna Peterson** (Chair), and members Dr. **Whitney Sanford**, Dr. **David Hackett**, and Dr. **Jaime Ahlberg**. Congratulations, Sarah!

## Deadlines

Here is our Spring 2015 schedule: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/soc/201501/all/religion.htm>

**The applications for Spring 2015 Travel Support for Graduate Students**, for the period January 1 – May 1, 2015, are due in the Dean's office by 4:00 pm on Monday, November 24, 2014. The application is available on the web at <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/forms/index.html>. 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 to Professor David Hackett by 4:00 pm, Wednesday, November 19, 2014. 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](http://sites.clas.ufl.edu/religion/files/Religion_Travel_Support_Application.pdf). Please submit this application to David Hackett by 4:00pm, Wednesday, November 26, 2014.

**The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies** offers fellowships and grants through the following competition: Distinguished Visiting Professorships in Buddhist Studies—deadline: January 14, 2015. More information is available on the ACLS website at <http://www.acls.org/programs/buddhist-studies/>. (Submitted by Professor **Vasudha Narayanan**.)

The U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce the opening of the scholarship competition for the **2015 Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program** in thirteen critical foreign languages. Applications will be due November 12, 2014 by 8:00 pm EST. The CLS Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It is a fully-funded overseas language program for American undergraduate and graduate students, with the goal of broadening the base of Americans studying and mastering critical languages and building relationships between the people of the United States and other countries. CLS provides study opportunities to a diverse range of students from across the United States at every level of language learning. The thirteen CLS languages are: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu. Please note that participants in the CLS Program are not required to have any experience studying most of these thirteen languages. Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Russian, and Japanese institutes have language prerequisites, which can be found on the CLS website: <http://www.clscholarship.org>. The CLS Program seeks participants with diverse interests, from a wide variety of fields of study, backgrounds and career paths, with the purpose of representing the full diversity of professional, regional, cultural and academic backgrounds in the United States. Thus, students from all academic disciplines, including business, engineering, law, medicine, science, social sciences, arts and humanities are encouraged to apply. There is no service requirement for CLS Alumni after the program. However, participants are expected to continue their language study beyond the scholarship period, and later apply their critical language skills in their professional careers. Participants are selected based on their commitment to language learning and plans to apply their language skills to their future academic or professional pursuits. Please note that CLS is an intensive group-based language program. The application is now live and available online at: <http://www.clscholarship.org>. Prior to preparing their application, interested students should review the full eligibility and application information on the CLS Program website: <http://www.clscholarship.org/information-for/applicants>.