

Special Thursday Bulletin, November 21, 2013

Department of Religion, University of Florida

Presentations at the American Academy of Religion

The American Academy of Religion (AAR) and the **Society of Biblical Literature (SBL)** will be holding their annual meetings in Baltimore, MD, November 23-26, 2013. UF faculty, graduate students, and alumni are very active in the AAR, which is the primary professional association for Religious Studies students and scholars in the US. The diverse topics addressed by the UF participants listed below give some indication of the wide range of research and teaching interests pursued in our department. Times and locations for these papers and panels can be found through AAR's on-line program book: http://papers.aarweb.org/program_book

Professor **Vasudha Narayanan** is presenting two papers in two sessions and also serving as a panelist in a third session. The papers are: "'Veda,' 'Purana,' and 'Mantra' in Tamil Islamic Literature," in a session entitled "A Proliferation of Friends: Hindus, Muslims, and Jains in History, Narrative, and Ritual in South Asia"; and "Dressed for Love, Dressed for Liberation: Ritual and Reflexivity in Performing Nammalvar's Poetry" in a session on "When God/desses Appear in Field Notes: Ethnographic and Theological Intersections in the Study of Hinduism." In addition, she will be one of the speakers in a panel on "Religious Genius - Exploring a Category in the Comparative Study of Saints," sponsored by the Comparative Studies in Religion Section and the Templeton Foundation.

Professor **Manuel Vasquez** will be participating in a joint panel of the North American Religions Section, the Anthropology of Religion Group, and the Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean Group, as well as in panels of the Roman Catholic Studies Group and the Religion and Politics Section--the Religion and Migration Group. In addition, he will be co-chairing a meeting of the chairs of religion/religious studies departments and programs at public universities.

Professor **Whitney Sanford** is presiding over the session "Consuming Identities: Religious Food Practices" in the newly formed group Religion and Food. She is also on the steering committee of this group.

Professor **David Hackett** will be a panelist in a session sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which is intended to help applicants to the NEH fellowships program. He is also chairing a session entitled "Placing the Subfield, North American Religions, Religion in the Americas and Beyond," where two Ph.D. alumnae from our Religion in the Americas track, Hilit Surowitz (Rutgers) and Shreena Gandhi (Kalamazoo College), as well as Manuel Vasquez will participate.

Professor **Zoharah Simmons** will be one of two respondents in a panel on the Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr., Group, whose theme is: "Two Score and Ten Years Later -Reflections on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the March on Washington."

Amy Brown (PhD Candidate, Nature) will present her paper "Pregnancy and a Feminist Critique of Individualism and Autonomy in Christian and Evolutionary Understandings of Subjectivity" for the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection group.

Publications

Professor **Bron Taylor's** "Arbophilia and Sacred Rebellion" has been published in the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 7.3 (2013), 237-42.

News

Bhakti Mamtora (PhD, Asia) has been accepted as a Graduate Student Interviewer for the Summer of 2014. The research project on cultural contact and immigration is funded by the Russell Sage Foundation.

Bhakti Mamtora's (PhD, Asia) paper proposal titled "Youth Activities: Creating a Swaminarayan-American Identity" has been accepted by the Hinduism in the Southeast panel for the annual SECSOR meeting in March 2014.

Outreach

Kerri Blumenthal (PhD, Americas) is collecting children's books to support the Creative Kids Program at The Healing House of Cusco, Peru. The Healing House is a non-profit organization based in Cusco that offers recreational and educational youth programs, as well as various healing modalities (yoga, Reiki, shiatsu, massage, acupuncture, meditation, art therapy, etc.) at no cost to local Cusqueños. If you would like to donate new or gently used children's books (written in Spanish, English, or Portuguese), please contact Kerri (blumentk@ufl.edu) or place them in her mailbox by December 1st. For more information about The Healing House, visit healinghousecusco.com.