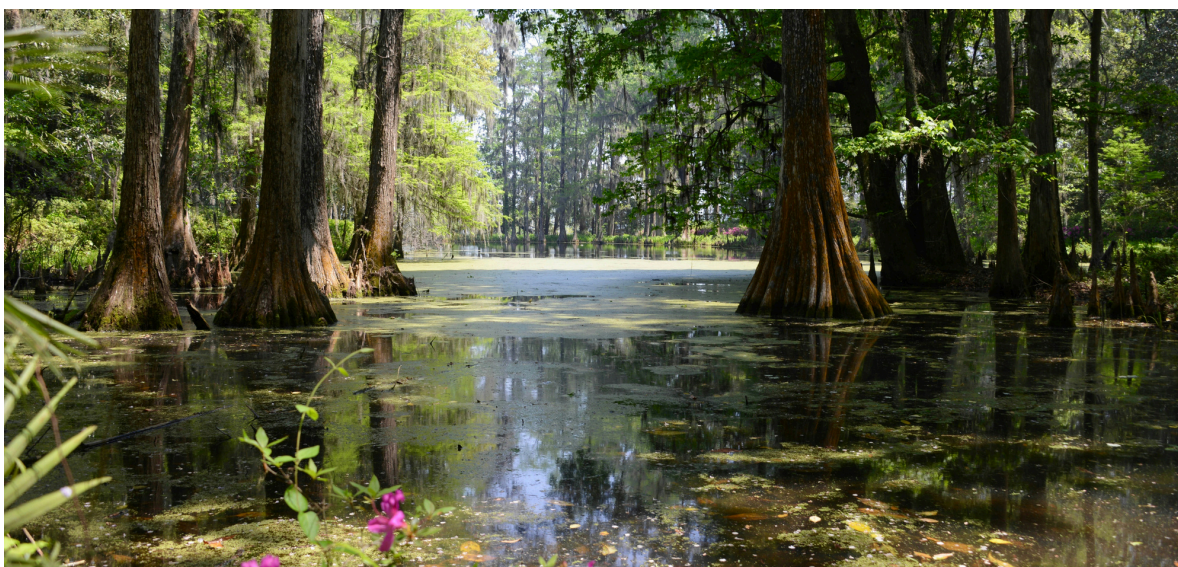


UF RELIGION

NEWSLETTER



NEWS

- Dr. Kawashima recently gave a presentation on his paper "The Wilderness Period as a Rite of Passage." [Continue on to the Presentations section to learn more.](#)
- The main office has undergone a summer transformation complete with a fresh new look and improved functionality. [Continue on to the Improvements section to learn more.](#)

EVENTS

- **Summer B & C** ends on **August 8th**. Good luck finishing out the summer semesters strong!
- **Summer Commencement** will take place from **August 8-9**. Congratulations to all Graduates!



Check out our social media or continue reading to see the **spotlight on recent alumni:**
Rachel Warren



University of Florida -
Religion Department



University of Florida
Religion



@ufreligion



@ufreligion



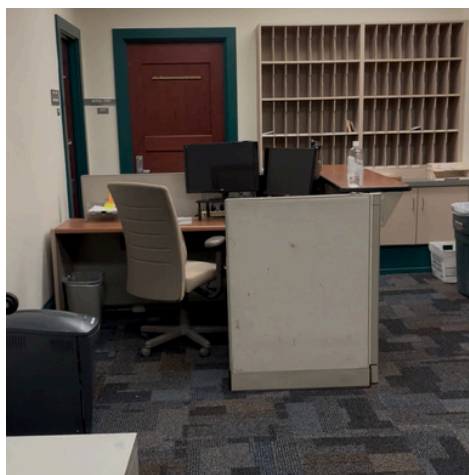
@ufreligion

PRESENTATIONS

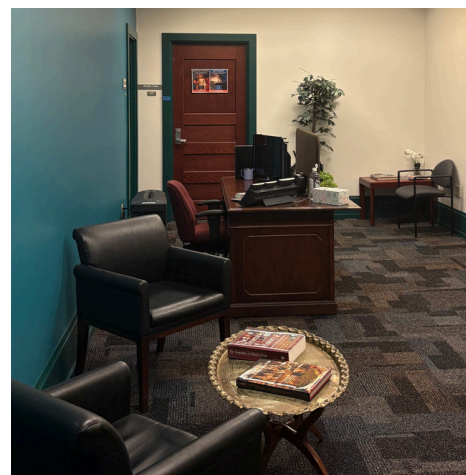
- **Dr. Kawashima** recently attended a conference at Uppsala University in Sweden at the 2025 SBL International Meeting. During this time, Dr. Kawashima gave a presentation on his paper "*The Wilderness Period as a Rite of Passage*". He examines the Exodus, Israelites' journey from Egypt, through the wilderness as both an initiation and a pilgrimage. Citing from Exodus 12 and Joshua 3-4, Dr. Kawashima argues that the journey had fundamentally transformed the identity and status of the travelers, as they departed Egypt as slaves, but re-emerged as an organized army. The exodus from Egypt had served as an act of salvation, signifying their freedom from slavery.

IMPROVEMENTS

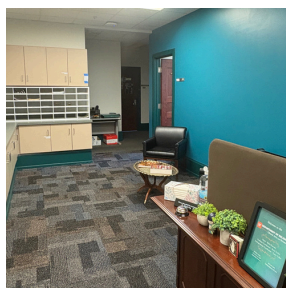
- Over the course of late Spring and into the Summer, the Religion Department received funding from CLAS aimed at enhancing the functionality and overall atmosphere of the department's main office. With the college's support, several improvements were made to create a more efficient, welcoming, and professional workspace. These updates included a fresh coat of paint, the installation of newly constructed mail boxes, the acquisition of an upgraded printer, new carpet, as well as new furniture. Thanks to these efforts, the department is well-prepared to welcome the new academic year with confidence and enthusiasm. Over the coming months, we will continue our efforts to make improvements to the main office space.



Before



After



Alumni Spotlight



Class of 2025!

Rachel Warren

"I found such a welcoming and brilliant community at UF Religion, and am so grateful for my experience here."

Rachel Warren, a May 2025 graduate and recipient of the prestigious Jaberg Award for outstanding achievement by a senior Religion major, continues to impress beyond her time as an undergrad at UF. After graduating, we reached out to Rachel to learn more about her journey since leaving the program and what her future holds.

Rachel Warren first took REL3099, Spirituality and Healthcare, as an elective course. This course made her think about alternative medicines and beliefs from a perspective she had never thought of before. After that course, she had loved it so much that she decided to double major in Religion and Psychology!

Her favorite class was REL 3294, Apocalypticism, with Professor Kawashima and it inspired her to pursue an honors thesis on the Apocalypse of Zephaniah.

Rachel is now pursuing her Ph.D. in psychology here at UF with plans to become an occupational health psychologist to promote work health, safety, and well-being. She also states that she would love to become a professor too!