

UF RELIGION

NEWSLETTER



NEWS

- Department of Religion Professor Emeritus **Dr. Richard Hiers** has recently passed. See *Page 2* for more details.
- **Dr. Ali Mian** published an article in the online publication ***Maydan***. See *Page 3* for more details.
- UF Religion had a successful tabling session at **CLAS Kickoff**. See *Page 4* for more details.

EVENTS

- The Fall 2026 semester has officially begun at UF. Welcome back, students! We're excited to kick off a new academic year filled with learning, discovery, and opportunities for growth. Wishing everyone a successful and rewarding semester ahead.



NEWS

- Department of Religion Professor Emeritus **Dr. Richard Hiers** recently passed away at the age of 94, leaving a lasting legacy as a scholar, teacher, mentor, and friend. A beloved member of the University of Florida community, he was known for his kindness, intellectual curiosity, and deep commitment to ethics, religion, and public life.

Professor Hiers joined the UF Department of Religion in **1961** and taught until 2003, inspiring generations of students through his teaching and scholarship on the Bible, ethics, environmental ethics, and social ethics. He earned four degrees from **Yale University** and later completed a law degree at the **University of Florida**, combining expertise in religion, ethics, and law throughout his distinguished career. He also served as an Affiliate Professor at the **UF Levin College of Law** and the **College of Natural Resources and Environment**.



Dr. Richard Hiers

A prolific scholar, Hiers authored nearly **sixty academic articles** and **more than a dozen books**. Even after retirement, he remained actively engaged in research and writing, publishing works that explored contemporary ethical and social issues through biblical and legal perspectives.

Professor Hiers will be remembered not only for his scholarly accomplishments, but also for his warmth, generosity, and profound impact on his students, colleagues, and friends. His contributions to the University of Florida and the study of religion will continue to inspire future generations.

PUBLICATIONS

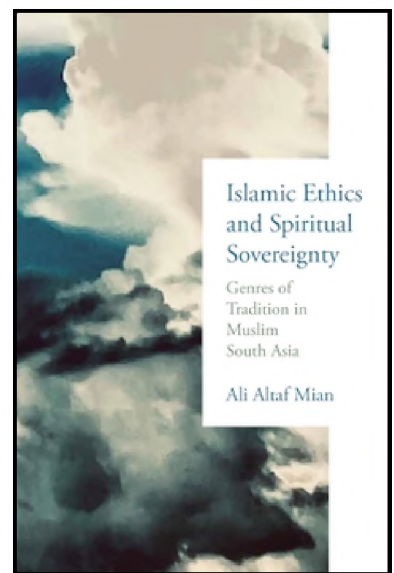
- **Dr. Ali Mian** published an article on August 10th, 2026 in *Maydan*, the online publication of George Mason University's AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies. Titled "*Resourcing Ritualization: Transference and Spiritual Sovereignty in the Islamic Tradition*," the article offers an in-depth exploration of themes from Dr. Mian's recently published book, *Islamic Ethics and Spiritual Sovereignty: Genres of Tradition in Muslim South Asia*.



Dr. Ali Mian

Islamic Ethics and Spiritual Sovereignty examines how attention to genre, embodiment, and religious practice can deepen our understanding of the Islamic tradition and the ways Muslims respond to the challenges of modern life. Drawing on the extensive writings of the influential South Asian Muslim theologian and Sufi scholar Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānavī (1863–1943), Dr. Mian explores how tradition functions as both an intellectual and spiritual framework for ethical transformation and the cultivation of spiritual sovereignty.

Through close textual analysis, Dr. Mian investigates the relationship between religious forms of life and forms of language, demonstrating how different literary and devotional genres shape ethical agency, ritual practice, and communal belonging. The book highlights how Islamic traditions engage questions of individualism, desire, authority, and interpretation in the modern world. By developing a distinctive trans-genre approach to reading religious texts, Dr. Mian offers new insights into the ongoing vitality of Islamic ethical and spiritual traditions and their capacity to address the complexities of contemporary life.



Cover of *Islamic Ethics and Spiritual Sovereignty*

Events

- The **Fall 2026 CLAS Kickoff** took place on Wednesday, August 19th, and was a great success. Hosted annually by the **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences** as part of UF's new student orientation programming, the event welcomed incoming undergraduate students to the University of Florida and introduced them to the college's diverse academic programs, resources, and opportunities. Students had the chance to connect with faculty, staff, and advisors from across CLAS while exploring potential majors, minors, and involvement opportunities available throughout their academic journey.



Left to right: Jeyoul Choi, Ashley Tisher, and Yaniv Feller

This year's Department of Religion representatives included Undergraduate Coordinator **Dr. Yaniv Feller**, **Dr. Jeyoul Choi**, and Office Manager **Ashley Tisher**, with Department Chair **Dr. Mario Poceski** stopping by to visit and engage with students. A highlight of the event was the opportunity to connect with more than 70 students, who enthusiastically discussed the Religion major and its opportunities with department representatives. Students were also treated to newly designed Department of Religion promotional merchandise.

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Want To Contribute to the Newsletter?

If you have any information that you would like featured in the newsletter, please email **Ashley Tisher** (a.tisher@ufl.edu).

We look forward to hearing from you!