

UF RELIGION

# NEWSLETTER



## NEWS

- **Dr. Yaniv Feller** recently presented at the **University of Toronto's Department for the Study of Religion**. See *Page 2* for more details.
- Graduate student **Rachael Diaz**'s proposal was accepted by the **American Academy of Religion (AAR)**. See *Page 3* for more details.
- **Dr. Bron Taylor** was featured on the "**Rip Current**" podcast to discuss radical environmentalism. See *Page 3* for more details.
- **Dr. Mario Poceski** will give a talk about his latest book at **Sophia University** in Tokyo, Japan. See *Page 5* for more details.
- **Dr. Anna Peterson** will speak at the **American Philosophical Association Pacific Conference**. See *Page 5* for more details.

## EVENTS

- On March 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the **Religion Graduate Student Association (RGSA)** hosted their **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Religion Graduate Student Symposium** at Pugh Hall. See *Page 4* for the highlights and photographs from the event.
- Undergraduate majors **Jordan Evans** and **Caden Kendzior** have been named recipients of this year's **Jaberg Award**. Each will receive a monetary prize, a congratulatory letter, and a certificate at the Annual End-of-Year Reception and Jaberg Award Ceremony on Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Congratulations!



## NEWS

- Professor **Dr. Yaniv Feller** recently visited the **University of Toronto's Department for the Study of Religion (DSR)** as a guest lecturer as part of the **DSR Lecture Series**, where he presented a talk titled "Temporary Exhibitions, Permanent Controversies, and Jewish Museums." In the accompanying interview, conducted by **Julie Sharff**, Dr. Feller reflected on his work in museum studies and Jewish thought, as well as his book *The Jewish Imperial Imagination* and the co-edited volume *Covenantal Thinking*.



(Left to Right): Julie Sharff and Dr. Yaniv Feller



Logo for the University of Toronto  
Department for the Study of Religion

- On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Professor **Dr. Yaniv Feller** will give a talk titled "Jews in Showcases? Exhibiting Religion in Jewish Museums" at the **Jewish Museum Vienna**, the oldest Jewish museum in the world. During his lecture, which will be given entirely in German, Dr. Feller will discuss modern Jewish museums identify as secular and examine what it means to exhibit a religion.



Logo for Jewish Museum Vienna.

## NEWS

- Congratulations to Graduate Student, **Rachaell Diaz**, whose proposal titled “Does God Prevail? Memory, Resistance, and Brotherhoods” has been accepted by the **Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit** in the **American Academy of Religion (AAR)**. She will be presenting her topic at the organizations annual meeting in **November 2026**.



**Rachaell Diaz**

- Professor **Dr. Bron Taylor** served as a scholarly consultant and interviewee for *Rip Current*, a narrative investigative podcast hosted by **Toby Ball**. Season 2, “*Judi Bari and the Timber Wars*,” examines the life of Judi Bari and the California Timber Wars with episodes released in 2025 and early 2026. Produced by iHeartPodcasts, the series draws extensively on Dr. Taylor’s research on radical environmentalism and features his historical and interpretive insights. The project represents a significant example of public scholarship, translating academic research into an accessible narrative format, and also led to discussions of potential future collaborative projects.



**Dr. Bron Taylor**

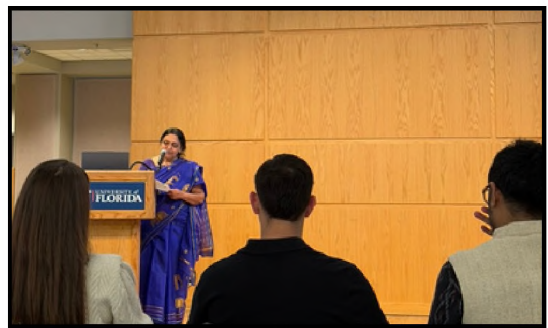


Thumbnail for the *Rip Current* podcast episode featuring Dr. Bron Taylor.

## EVENTS

- On March 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the **Religion Graduate Student Association (RGSA)** successfully hosted its **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Symposium** on the topic of "Religion: Conflict and Continuity" at Pugh Hall. The first part of the two-day event consisted of a keynote presentation titled "*A God-Feeling in Every Heart: Strategic Innovation among South India's Hindu Drummer-Priests*" and a seminar by guest lecturer **Dr. Amy Allocco** of Elon University.

The second day opened with welcome remarks from keynote speaker Dr. Amy Allocco, followed by an Undergraduate Panel featuring presentations by **John Vondruska, Reed Liebman, Jordan Evans, and Caden Kendzior**. The program continued with interdisciplinary graduate panels showcasing a wide range of research topics. Religion graduate students **Rachael Diaz, Yuan Zhang, Rajani Maharjan, Prathik Murali, and Laura James** presented their work, contributing to a dynamic exchange of ideas. Overall, the event fostered the sharing of diverse perspectives and provided students with valuable experience researching their ideas and presenting their work in a professional academic setting.



Top Left photo (left to right): UF Religion Undergraduate Students: **Caden Kendzior, Jordan Evans, John Mark Vondruska, Reed Liebman**

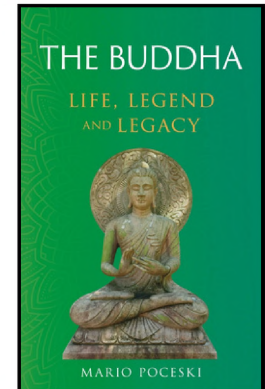
Top Right Photo: Distinguished Professor **Dr. Vasudha Narayanan**

Bottom Left Photo: Keynote Speaker **Dr. Amy Allocco**

Bottom Right Photo (left to right): UF Religion Graduate Students: **Prathik Murali, Rajani Maharjan, Laura Ahrens James**

## PRESENTATIONS

- On May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Chair **Dr. Mario Poceski** will give a presentation at **Sophia University** in Tokyo, Japan titled “Rethinking Buddha’s Life and Legacy”. The talk will be based on his new book, ***The Buddha: Life, Legend and Legacy*** which examines the life, legend, and lasting legacy of the historical Buddha, a figure revered by hundreds of millions worldwide. Poceski situates the Buddha’s spiritual vision and teachings on the dharma within social, cultural, and religious contexts, while also tracing how later generations of monastic and lay Buddhists reshaped his image and influence. The work offers a fresh perspective on Buddhist history, philosophy, and practice, as well as the global reimagining of the Buddha over time.



Official book cover of  
“*The Buddha: Life,  
Legend and Legacy*”.

- The **2026 American Philosophical Foundation (APA) Pacific Division Conference** will be held from April 8<sup>th</sup> - April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, where **Dr. Anna Peterson** will present two papers: “*The Challenges and Urgency of Teaching about Climate Change in Florida*” at a Teaching Hub session called Teaching on Climate and the Environment: Challenges and Opportunities, and the paper “*Teaching Public Ethics*” at a session sponsored by the **Public Philosophy Network**.



Dr. Anna Peterson

- On April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, **Dr. Rachel Gordan** will be presenting at **Barnard College** to discuss “*Moving from Race to Religion in Laura Z. Hobson’s Gentleman’s Agreement (1947)*.” Dr. Gordan will be discussing Hobson’s novel which explores nonviolent antisemitism and the Jewish community in the United States.

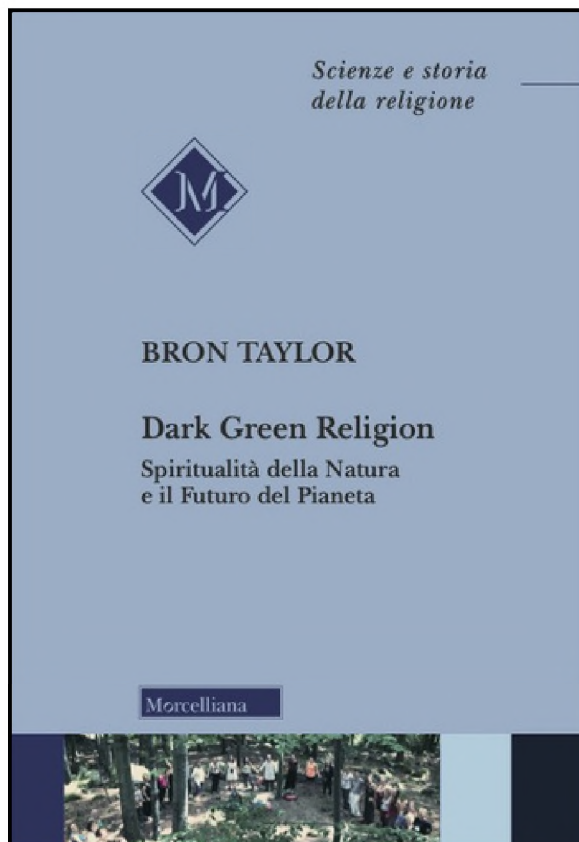


Dr. Rachel Gordan

## PUBLICATIONS

Professor **Dr. Bron Taylor**'s book has been translated and published in Italian. Titled *Dark Green Religion: Spiritualità della Natura e il Futuro del Pianeta*, the volume also includes a retrospective article that expands upon Taylor's original thesis. This article is titled "Dark Green Religion: Una retrospettiva per l'edizione italiana."

Dr. Taylor will travel to **Roma Tre University** in Rome, Italy on April 17<sup>th</sup> to participate in a discussion of his book. He will be joined by fellow scholars **Angelica Federici** and **Andrea Rota**, along with the book's translator, **Giovanna Parmigiani**. Together, they will discuss the book's analytical frameworks, arguments, and supporting evidence.



Official book cover for "Dark Green Religion: Spiritualità della Natura e il Futuro del Pianeta".



Event flyer for Dr. Taylor's book discussion at Roma Tre University.

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

*We look forward to hearing from you!*