

UF RELIGION

NEWSLETTER



NEWS

- **Dr. Terje Ostebo** will be giving a lecture at the **University of Palermo** in Palermo, Italy. See *Page 3* for more details.
- **Dr. Rachel Gordan** and **Dr. Yaniv Feller** presented on a panel at a conference hosted by **UNC Chapel Hill's Carolina Center for Jewish Studies**. See *Page 4* for more details.
- **Dr. Bron Taylor** released a double issue of the ***Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture***. See *Page 5* for more details.

EVENTS

- The Religion Department recently hosted the annual **End-of-Year Reception & Jaberg Award Ceremony**. See *Page 2* for more details.



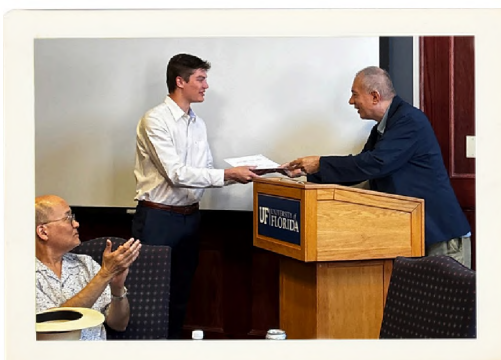
- **Spring Commencement & Graduation** will be taking place from April 29 - May 4. **Congrats Grads!**

EVENTS

On Friday, April 17th, the Department of Religion hosted its **annual End-of-Year Reception and Jaberg Award Ceremony** to reflect on the accomplishments made over the academic year and to celebrate the achievements of religion majors **Jordan Evans** and **Caden Kendzior**, who both received this year's Jaberg Award based on their outstanding research proposals and overall coursework. Each student was awarded with a certificate, congratulatory letter, and a monetary award to assist in their future studies.

The Russell and Katherine Jaberg Endowment gives support to graduating undergraduate students from the UF Department of Religion who dedicated their time to scholarship and contributed to the academic community through their student careers.

In celebration, attendees of the event enjoyed a catered lunch and the opportunity to mingle with faculty, students, and the award winners.



Top-Left: Chair Dr. Mario Poceski with Jaberg Recipient Jordan Evans.

Middle-Left: Chair Dr. Mario Poceski presenting the second Jaberg Award to Caden Kendzior.

Bottom-Left: Jordan Evans and her family.

Top-Right: Undergraduate Jaberg Award recipients Jordan Evans and Caden Kendzior with their certificates.

PRESENTATIONS

On May 5th, Professor **Dr. Terje Ostebo**, together with **Biruk Terrefe (University of Bayreuth)**, will give a lecture titled: “Urban Politics in Ethiopia and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s Religious Worldview” at the **University of Palermo** in Palermo, Italy.

The lecture will examine the dramatic recent transformation of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’s capital—marked by new high-rises, expansive boulevards, and lush parks—and analyze how these changes are connected to the prime minister’s embrace of Prosperity Gospel and positive-thinking ideologies.



Dr. Terje Ostebo



Biruk Terrefe



**Università
degli Studi
di Palermo**

Logo for the University of Palermo

PRESENTATIONS

On April 20th, 2026, Professors **Dr. Rachel Gordan** and **Dr. Yaniv Feller** participated in a panel titled “Reinterpreting American Judaism” at the **American Jewish Landscapes After October 7 Conference**, hosted by UNC Chapel Hill’s Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

The conference convened scholars and writers from a range of disciplines to examine recent changes in Jewish American life in the aftermath of October 7. The panel was moderated by **Gabrielle Berlinger** (UNC Chapel Hill) and also featured **Vanessa Ochs** (Emerita, University of Virginia) and **Lauren Rekhelman** (UNC Chapel Hill).



Top-Left & Top-Right: Dr. Rachel Gordan and Dr. Yaniv Feller presenting individually at the conference.

Bottom: Dr. Yaniv Feller speaks to an audience member as part of a panel along with Dr. Rachel Gordan.

PUBLICATIONS

Professor **Dr. Bron Taylor** recently orchestrated and published a special double issue of the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (JSRNC)* titled *Dark Green Religion in Europe*. The issue is co-edited with **Bernhard Gissbl** and **Kate Rigby**, who co-sponsored the related Spring 2024 conference in Germany. JSRNC editors and UF Religion and Nature PhD graduates **Joe Witt** and **Amanda Nichols** had significant roles within editing and producing this issue.

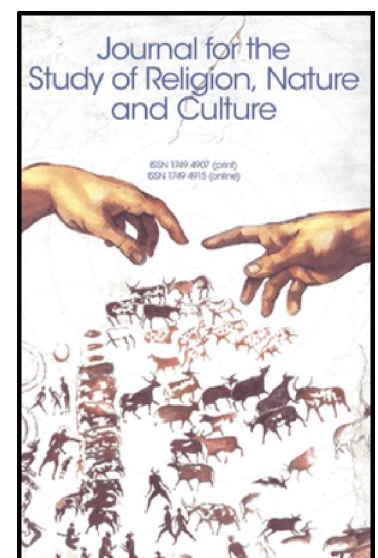


Dr. Bron Taylor

In *Dark Green Religion* (2010), Dr. Taylor argued that growing numbers of people worldwide regard nature as sacred, with increasing cultural and political influence. These ideas sparked sustained scholarly debate and led to the Spring 2024 conference and this thematic double issue on Dark Green Religion in Europe. In this overview, he outlines the core elements of the dark green analytic framework, the nature-based spiritualities it identifies, and the expanding evidence supporting them since the book's publication. Drawing on examples from culture, environmental movements, media, museums, and intellectual trends, he shows how European cases both reflect and shape global developments, affirming the framework's explanatory power and the growing influence of what he calls Gaian Animism.

Within the issue, Dr. Taylor wrote and co-wrote four different pieces for the publication:

- “**Dark Green Religion in Europe: Introduction to the special issue**” by Bron Taylor
- “**Dark Green Religion: framework, evidence, impact, and future**” by Bron Taylor
- “**Manufacturing dark green religion in the European ecovillage milieu**” by Todd LeVasseur and Bron Taylor
- “**Beyond religious-secular divides: Dark Green Religion, Islam, and environmental behavior in Türkiye**” by Çağdaş Dedeoğlu, Tuğrul Cabir Hakyemez, and Bron Taylor



Official cover for an edition of the JSRNC

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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).

We look forward to hearing from you!