WHAT IS “RELIGIOUS LITERACY”?!

Elon University has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to educating its students, faculty, staff, and surrounding community about the impact that religious ideas and spiritual practices have on our everyday lives, the currents of our local and national cultures, and the major events of our times. Increasingly it is finding national recognition for its leadership in promoting excellence in scholarship, teaching, and public conversation about what religion is and how it functions. Through the Center for the Study of Religion, Culture, and Society, the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, the Religious Studies Department, and the work of many faculty across other departments on campus, Elon continues to champion what some people call “religious literacy.”

What constitutes religious literacy, and how would one measure it? I was invited this year to join an initiative spearheaded by the American Academy of Religion and funded by the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation to explore those issues. Our final objective is to publish guidelines for defining what an educated person should know about religion and, therefore, what colleges and universities can be doing to ensure that our citizenry has the ability to make informed decisions about public policy and electoral candidates when questions about those matters involve religious groups, practices, issues, or ideas. If we can all agree that understanding something about religion is important in a democratic and pluralistic society and that it is the responsibility of our educational institutions to foster that understanding, then what are the concrete learning benchmarks that we would like to see every college graduate meet?

These are some of the questions that the AAR taskforce on “Religious Literacy Collegewide” are asking. Our answers are still preliminary at this point, but among the things that members of our task force— who represent a range of institutional types, from community colleges to large, private universities—are considering are these:

- Distinguish reliable from unreliable information about religious groups
- Describe the internal diversity of at least one religious tradition
- Describe how religion has shaped the history of a nation or community
- Distinguish confessional statements from within a tradition from descriptive statements about that tradition

It is a cliché to say we live in a polarized era, but I suspect that many reading this report would agree that meaningful and substantive understanding of those who are different than us can go a long distance towards bridging our divides. Religious literacy should mean more than command of a few stray verses of someone else’s holy book. It would, in my opinion, include a basic appreciation for the history and complexity of any identity and the internally diverse character of any religious group.

I feel fortunate every day that I work at a university where the importance of religious literacy is widely recognized and where investments are regularly made to ensure that our students know something about the history and values of their neighbors in our complicated world. Elon’s Multifaith Strategic Plan, “Engaging Religions/Building Community,” which this report discusses on p. 20, is perhaps the most concrete and detailed expression of its commitment to educating global citizens who can engage with people of different religious convictions or none.

As this report will make clear, the CSRCS has the support of many, many campus partners in its endeavors. We are proud of the work Elon does to promote serious engagement with complex issues in the interests of a better future. I am happy to report about our accomplishments in 2016-17 and excited about the challenges that 2017-18 will present.
The 2017 symposium keynote speaker David Cook, of Rice University.

I
n this first year, faculty conveners Dr. Lynn Huber (Religious Studies) and Dr. Tom Mould (Anthropology) worked to identify and invite a set of scholars whose work could effectively explore the contours of the 2017 theme, “On the Edge of Apocalypse.” Eleven scholars from universities across North America accepted the invitation to present papers that traced the edges of apocalyptic thought and practice. The symposium’s five sessions met February 9-11 and covered such topics as “Apocalypse and Temporal Imaging,” “Apocalypse and Social Cohesion,” “Apocalypse and Gender in Popular Culture,” “Apocalypse as Contemporary Ideology,” and “Apocalypse as Queer Unveiling.” The subjects of individual papers ranged widely and included Iranian horror films, Hindu nationalist supporters of Donald Trump, the Holy Land Experience theme park, a 16th-century Indo-Afghan Islamic sectarian group, and the Netflix original series, “Unbreakable: Kimmy Schmidt.”

The keynote by David Cook of Rice University, “Every Time a Horn Goes, Another Replaces It: Cyclicality and Conquest in Muslim Apocalypticism,” drew a standing room only crowd in McKinnon Hall in the Moseley Student Center.

The Elon Center for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society crossed a major milestone this past February when it hosted its inaugural scholarly symposium called, “On the Edge: New Directions in the Interdisciplinary Study of Religion.”

“On the Edge” arrives with apocalyptic impact

The Elon Center for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society crossed a major milestone this past February when it hosted its inaugural scholarly symposium called, “On the Edge: New Directions in the Interdisciplinary Study of Religion.”
afternoon. This session opened the door for productive conversations for both visitors and students alike. The next “On the Edge” symposium will be held in 2019 to once again bring together scholars working at the theoretical and methodological boundaries of fields that have a stake in the critical analysis of religion—law, history, psychology, anthropology, literature/textual studies, philosophy, art history, political science, classics, and gender studies. The CSRCS is currently accepting proposals for the February 2019 theme.

On the Edge of Apocalypse

Presentations:

**Arun Chaudhuri** (York University)
“Hindu Nationalist Futures and the Perpetual Imagination of the End”

**David Cook** (Kokos University)
“Every Time a Horn Goes, Another Replaces It: Cicilcality and Conquest in Muslim Apocalypticism”

**Bob Royalty** (Wheat College)
“The Glorious Appearance Daily at 4:30 pm: Tensions and Contradictions in Contemporary Christian Apocalypticism”

**Robert Glenn Howard** (University of Wisconsin, Madison)
“Apocalypse Failed?: Vernacular Authority in a New Age Religious Movement”

**Megan Goodwin** (Emory University)
“Gendering the End Times: Apocalypse, Apocalypse, We Caused It with Our Dumbness”

**Kristian Petersen** (University of Nebraska/Omaha)
“The Shadow of the End: An Islamic Horror Film”

**Matthew Sutton** (Washington State University)
“Billy Graham’s End of Days: The Mainstreaming of Fundamentalist Apocalypticism”

**William Sherman** (Stanford University)
“Apocalypse, Again: Language and Repetition in a Qur’anic Imitation”

**Jonathan Herman** (Georgia State University)
“Meet the New Age, Same As the Old Age: Vanishing Millenarianism in the Western Appropriation of Daoism”

**Lynn Huber** (Elon University)
“ ‘Pulling Down the Sky’: Queer Interpretation of Revelation and the Apocalypse of Keith Haring and William S. Burroughs”

**Kent Brintnall** (University of North Carolina, Charlotte)

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First Cohort Of Multifaith Scholars Named

This spring Elon University named its first class of Multifaith Scholars, a new program made possible by a 2016 seed grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation. The Multifaith Scholars program will offer a two-year, experientially rich, and academically rigorous educational opportunity for juniors and seniors who show great potential as intellectually curious and socially engaged multifaith leaders. Multifaith Scholars will pursue coursework, mentored undergraduate research, and co-curricular engagement with local communities that will promote multifaith learning and reflection on multifaith issues. The fellowship will provide each student $5,000 annually during their final two years at Elon. Amy Allocco, associate professor of religious studies, will serve a three-year term as the founding director of the program. Allocco expressed her enthusiasm for the meaningful work with religious communities in the region that the fellowship will make possible for students. “Multifaith scholars will be involved in crafting and establishing a community-based program dedicated to knowledge and engagement across lines of difference,” Allocco said. “I am very excited to be a part of this opportunity for Elon to forge deeper ties with residents and communities of faith in the area.”

Students across all majors are eligible to apply. Those selected who complete the Multifaith Scholars program will possess a
The six Multi-faith Scholars will pursue projects ranging from:

- Examining the role of faith-based values in non-governmental organizations in India, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and the United States
- Exploring historical attitudes and contemporary interactions between Jews and Christians in Israel and the United States
- Analyzing the ways in which South Asian musical and performance traditions may cross religious boundaries among Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians
- Considering how justice-oriented interfaith organizations interact with faith communities to promote participation in social justice work for their participants and congregations
- Investigating religion and secularism in the public sphere through research on migrant populations from Middle Eastern countries in Europe
- Researching the training practices of faith-based organizations in North Carolina and Texas as they prepare employees for interactions with refugees from diverse religious backgrounds.

The 2017-19 Multifaith Scholars along with their majors and faculty mentors are:

- **Samantha Crosier** (English and Political Science)
  Mentor: Geoffrey Clausen (Religious Studies)

- **Kannon Hall** (Strategic Communications and International Studies)
  Mentor: Sheeren ElGamal (Arabic)

- **Kristina Meyer** (Mathematics and Religious Studies)
  Mentor: Toddie Peters (Religious Studies)

- **Jocelyn Pietro** (Public Health and Psychology)
  Mentor: Amanda Tapler (Public Health)

- **Styrling Rohr** (Anthropology and Religious Studies)
  Mentor: Amy Allocco (Religious Studies)

- **Sophie Zinn** (International Studies and Political Science)
  Mentor: Brian Pennington (Religious Studies)

Senior negotiator and democracy activist speaks on the current state of the Syrian civil war and prospects for peace

On September 7, the CSRCS was proud to present Najib Ghadbian, a special representative for the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces to the United States and the United Nations. Ghadbian helped the Elon community to better understand the current state of the Syrian civil war, the war-torn country’s future, and the effect of the crisis in Syria on the rest of the world. Ghadbian is a Syrian pro-democracy activist and academic. He served on the board of the Day After Project, a cooperative movement by members of the Syrian opposition to outline a plan to rebuild the country and end the Syrian conflict once President Bashar al-Assad was
out of power. Ghadbian has been a central figure in the multinational negotiations over the shape of a post-conflict Syria as well as a champion for democracy in the Middle East and a democratic Syria. According to the United Nations, the Syrian crisis continues to be the “biggest humanitarian emergency of our era.” After five years of war and as many as 500,000 dead, nearly five million refugees have fled to other parts of the Middle East or Europe with no end to the conflict in Syria in sight. Ghadbian detailed the specific roles and objectives of many of the parties involved in the Syrian conflict and urged the Elon community to learn more about Syria, the region, and the conflict so that they could make informed decisions about how they can support Syrians and Syria’s refugees.

The Faces of Syria: Refugee Voices

The CSRCs was honored to assist in sponsoring another unique event dedicated to raising awareness about the disaster unfolding in Syria in September, this time by hearing from a Syrian refugee family recently settled in the area.

The panel discussion focused on the family’s experience during the early years of the war and their journey from Syria to the U.S. This event was the latest in a series of campus-wide events and discussions that began in the midst of the Arab Spring protests of 2011 and has continued since. It tied directly to Dr. Ghadbian’s Sept. 7 talk and helped Elon students begin the academic year with a primer on the humanitarian crisis that is gripping the globe. The event was also sponsored by a set of campus partners who have been dedicated to education about events in Syria, including Speak Out for Syria, the International and Global Studies program, The Center for Public Affairs – Department of Political Science, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, PERCS, Peace and Conflict Studies, Department of History and Geography and the Truitt Center.

Holocaust survivor packs LaRose, Encourages compassion & righteousness

Ze’ev Harel remembers arriving at Auschwitz when he was 15: “The sky was so beautiful, the sky was full of stars, but the stench,” he recalls, was horrid. Hundreds of students streamed into the LaRose Theater on May 3 for an opportunity many know will not be available to their generation for much longer—to hear first-hand the memories of a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. Harel, Professor Emeritus of Social Work at Cleveland State University and now a resident of Greensboro, fought for an independent Jewish state after the war. He had been interred at the Mauthausen and Ebensee concentration camps before he was liberated by the US Army’s 3d Cavalry. Elon Hillel, The History Department, The Jewish Studies program, and The Center for Study of Religion, Culture, and Society came together to host Harel. His talk focused not on the horrors of the Holocaust but on inspiring students, who filled every seat in the auditorium and every available space on the floor, to be mindful of their blessings, to show compassion and understanding to others, and to stand up for righteousness as those who helped hide, protect, and liberate Jews during the Nazi era did.

Renowned Scholar
Amy-Jill Levine Discusses Jewish and Christian Approaches to Scripture

The Truitt Center’s H. Sheldon Smith lecturer this year, Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, is a self-described “Yankee Jewish feminist who teaches in a predominately Christian divinity school in the buckle of the Bible Belt.” Dr. Levine, professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University, delivered the lecture, “Agreeing to Disagree: How Jews and Christians Read Scripture Differently.” Levine is a prolific author of numerous books and articles on the Bible and biblical interpretation, including Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi and The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus.

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Popular author and interfaith activist highlights Muslim contributions to American culture

Longstanding advocate for interfaith work and theological study across traditions, Dr. Amir Hussain of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles visited Elon in March to present a lecture entitled “Muslims and the Making of America” based on his 2016 book of the same name.

Recent US citizen, Hussain was born in Pakistan, grew up in Canada, and received his bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees from the University of Toronto. He has been the co-editor of several textbooks including the fourth editions of World Religions: Western Traditions and World Religions: Eastern Traditions from Oxford University Press. Hussain spoke about the role that notable Muslim Americans have played in sports, music, art and politics.

Hussain argues that America would not exist as it does today without the essential contributions made by its Muslim citizens. In his book, Hussain writes, “Islam is viewed in a three-fold way: as new to America; as foreign to America; and as comprised of adherents who are violent, ‘un-American,’ and a threat to our nation. The reality is that Muslims have helped us to be more American, to be better Americans.”

ROOTS OF PEACE: Israeli-Palestinian dialogue

Israeli-Palestinian peace activists Ali Abu Awwad and Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger visited Elon’s campus on October 7 with other members of their peacemaking organization, Roots. Awwad, a Palestinian activist for nonviolence and Schlesinger, an Israeli settler and advocate for coexistence, presented their vision of dignity, trust, mutual recognition, and respect between Israelis and Palestinians.

Roots, which describes itself as a local Palestinian-Israeli initiative for understanding, nonviolence, and transformation, carries out groundbreaking grassroots projects and hosts dialogue groups. The event was co-sponsored by Elon Hillel, the Truitt Center, Jewish Studies, Middle East Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, Jewish Life, and the International and Global Studies program.

Further details about the initiatives that Roots sponsors can be found at www.friendsofroots.net.

HOPE, PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND LOVE: The Messages of Marc Chagall in his Artwork and Literature

In mid-November, the CSRCS had the privilege of partnering with the Art and Art History Department and the Residential Campus Initiative to host acclaimed speaker on artist Marc Chagall, Vivian R. Jacobson. Jacobson worked with Chagall on major international projects during the last eleven years of his life, some of his most productive years. Her lecture detailed the interreligious themes that are threaded through not only Chagall’s visual art but also his writing, a lesser known element of Chagall’s career. Jacobson accompanied her presentation with images from Chagall’s prolific career that inspired his writings.

For more information about Jacobson and her work, you may visit her website here.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE ACTIVISTS VISIT ELON

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Élan and Camerata concerts spotlight Gospel traditions

On April 27 and 29, the CSRCS was proud to help sponsor both the Élan spring concert, Jubilation!, and the Chorale and Camerata Spring Choral Showcase. Elon's vocal jazz and a cappella ensemble presented a selection of music highlighting the history and tradition of the gospel jubilee quartet featuring selections and arrangements from groups including the Jubilee Four and the Golden Gate Quartet. Both groups were honored to host special guest artist, Dr. Kevin Johnson, son of the late Willie T. Johnson (founding member of the Gates). Dr. Johnson is an associate professor of music at Spelman College and is a renowned musician, composer and active clinician. He currently serves as the Minister of Music for Lyke House Catholic Student Center in the Atlanta University Consortium. His works have resulted in performances for the Archdiocese of Atlanta and Catholic Archdiocese nationwide and international performances with the Spelman Glee Club. In March 2016, Dr. Johnson led the Spelman College Glee Club in song at the White House. The Spelman Glee Club also joined Dr. Johnson on his visit to Elon and presented their own selections during the Chorale and Camerata concert, “Lift Every Voice and Sing!” Dr. Johnson’s appearance was supported in part by the Elon Fund for Excellence.

Diversity education for the campus: Targeting anti-Muslim rhetoric

The CSRCS continues to try and do its part to counter widespread ignorance and fear of Islam with programming and events that promote balanced, historically informed, and evidence-based education about Islam and Muslim Americans. CSRCS Director Brian Pennington serves on the Steering Committee for the Consortium of Diversity and Inclusion Content Experts (CDICE) and has delivered a set of talks on the history of US Islamophobia and the network of funders and self-appointed “experts” who spread misinformation and suspicion of Islam. He made presentations to a series of Core Curriculum 110 students as part of the Diversity Roundtables sponsored by the Office of Inclusive Community every semester and to the innovative “Refusing to Wait” course on democracy that Elon faculty and staff, led by Professors Tom Mould and Toddie Peters, developed after the 2016 US Presidential Election.

CSRCS Co-Sponsors International Conference with Historic University of Madras in South India

The Elon Center for the Study of Religion, Culture, and Society (CSRCS) hosted a conference in collaboration with the University of Madras in Chennai, India, on July 28-29, 2016. The conference attracted more than 50 attendees and 16 presenters from all over India and six additional countries. With the theme “To Take Place: Culture, Religion, and Home-making in and beyond South Asia,” speakers addressed the means and practices by which migrants, displaced persons, and various other sub-communities in South Asia establish physical, conceptual and emotional spaces that put them at home or give rise to conflict with other groups. The keynote address, “Making a Himalayan Abode: Conflict, Aspiration and Power at a Garhwal Shrine” was delivered by CSRCS Director, Brian Pennington. The conference was organized by Amy Allocco, associate professor of Religious Studies at Elon and James Ponniah, assistant professor in the Department of Christian Studies at University of Madras. The conference reflects deepening ties between the Elon CSRCS and the University of Madras in Chennai, where Allocco has collaborated with various faculty members and research scholars there while she conducted her sabbatical research in Chennai in 2015-16.
Mentor Grants are intended to help in religion. Scholar Development further engaging their interests graduate research can provide for many opportunities that under courses often do not recognize the requirement. Even the students who courses that satisfy a Core re South Asia Research Group at Elon (SARGE). Six students made presentations about their long-term research projects that they had been conducting in Nepal or India.

CSRCS Summer Research Fellowships grants are available to all students with a developed CSRCS Summer Research Fellowships 2017 CSRCS Summer Research Fellows: Styrling Rohr (Anthropology and Religious Studies) “Ritual Musicians and Expressive Culture in South Asian Religious Traditions” Amy Allocco, mentor (Religious Studies) Abigail Williams (Human Service Studies) “Saints Don’t Cry: Clergy’s Attitudes towards Mental Health Services and Experiences of Burnout” Judy Esposito, mentor (Human Service Studies)
of women who served as respected temple dancers and courtesans in South India from the twelfth century. Their institutions and initiation rituals have been under attack by reformers who have associated them with prostitution since the nineteenth century.

Justin Brown ’17 was awarded a Graduate Fellowship from the national honor society for Religious Studies, Theta Alpha Kappa, in recognition of his Honors Research on transgenerational communities in India. The award will help support his pursuit of a masters degree at Indiana University, Bloomington.

Melina Oliverio ’16 continues to receive national recognition for the research she did while an Elon student under Dr. Amy Allocco. This year she was named First Runner Up for the Albert T. Clark Undergraduate Paper Award given by the Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa and she received Honorable Mention for the Mariana McJimsey Undergraduate Paper Award given by ASIANetwork.

Promoting Faculty Scholarship
First Publication!

In a year of many firsts, the CSRCS celebrated the first publication of scholarship conducted under its sponsorship. The Journal of Jewish Ethics published the roundtable of essays, “Virtue Ethics and the Musar Movement” (3/1 (2017): 118-177), a set of responses to the 2015 book, Sharing the Burden: Rabbi Simhah Zissel Ziv and the Path of Musar (SUNY Press) by Assistant Professor, Geoffrey D. Claussen, Elon’s Lori and Eric Sklut Emerging Scholar in Jewish Studies. The CSRCS had sponsored the roundtable in March 2016 in celebration of the release of Claussen’s first book about Ziv, a nineeenth-century leader of the Musar movement that promoted the path of virtue among Eastern Europe’s Jews. The roundtable features the contributions of Drs. Andrea Dana-Cooper of UNC Chapel Hill, Christian B. Miller of Wake Forest University, and Elon’s own Toddie Peters and Jeffrey Pugh.

Elon students and faculty alike were excited to celebrate the release of Guide to the End Times: Theology After You’ve Been Left Behind, the latest book by Elon’s Marude Sharpe Powell Professor of Religious Studies, Dr. Jeffrey Pugh during a happy hour discussion at the Oak House on October 4. Sprinkled with tales of his youthful experimentation with apocalypticism, Dr. Pugh’s book offers an extensive account of apocalyptic interpretations of the Bible through history, the role that “capture culture” has played within the church, and the evolution of groups that interpret modern events through the lens of sacred Christian texts to predict the return of Jesus Christ. Moderated by one of the country’s most respected scholar’s of the Book of Revelation, Elon’s own Dr. Lynn Huber, Professor and Chair of the Religious Studies Department, the conversation was filled with laughter as she and Pugh traded ideas about the nature and uses of apocalyptic ideas. Guide to the End Times is published by Fortress Press as part of the Homebrewed Christianity series. To mark the accomplishment, the CSRCS presented Pugh with a case of Homebrewed Rapture by Mebane’s Red Monster Brewing. We believe Guide to the Endtimes may be the first theology book to ever have its own signature beer—cheers, Dr. Pugh!

HuffPo Takeover!
Three students, Audrey Griffith ’17, Justin Brown ’17, and Emily McHugh ’17, had pieces based on their research published in the Huffington Post.

Be sure to read them here!
India’s Third Gender: Rejected Or Embraced (Or Both)?
India’s Endangered Parsis: How One Minority Group Is Combating Extinction In The Midst Of Overpopulation
Stop “Saving” Women: A Transnational Feminist Approach

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Elon students and faculty alike were excited to celebrate the release of Guide to the End Times: Theology After You’ve Been Left Behind, the latest book by Elon’s Marude Sharpe Powell Professor of Religious Studies, Dr. Jeffrey Pugh during a happy hour discussion at the Oak House on October 4. Sprinkled with tales of his youthful experimentation with apocalypticism, Dr. Pugh’s book offers an extensive account of apocalyptic interpretations of the Bible through history, the role that “capture culture” has played within the church, and the evolution of groups that interpret modern events through the lens of sacred Christian texts to predict the return of Jesus Christ. Moderated by one of the country’s most respected scholar’s of the Book of Revelation, Elon’s own Dr. Lynn Huber, Professor and Chair of the Religious Studies Department, the conversation was filled with laughter as she and Pugh traded ideas about the nature and uses of apocalyptic ideas. Guide to the End Times is published by Fortress Press as part of the Homebrewed Christianity series. To mark the accomplishment, the CSRCS presented Pugh with a case of Homebrewed Rapture by Mebane’s Red Monster Brewing. We believe Guide to the Endtimes may be the first theology book to ever have its own signature beer—cheers, Dr. Pugh!

HuffPo Takeover!
Three students, Audrey Griffith ’17, Justin Brown ’17, and Emily McHugh ’17, had pieces based on their research published in the Huffington Post.

Be sure to read them here!
India’s Third Gender: Rejected Or Embraced (Or Both)?
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2016-17: ENGAGING RELIGIONS/BUILDING COMMUNITY

Elon’s Strategic Plan for Multi-Faith Engagement Approaches Its Halfway Point

In the fall of 2015, Elon embarked on implementation of the recommendations made in the Multifaith Strategic Plan, “Engaging Religions/Building Community.” This important blueprint lays out specific steps for enhancing global engagement, fostering interfaith dialogue, and promoting multi-faith education at the university. The full plan with its projected outcomes is available on the CSRCS website here.

Plan proposes four major objectives:

- Nurture the creation of a more religiously diverse and welcoming campus community
- Develop the ability of the campus community to engage with colleagues and communities from diverse religious identities and worldviews
- Provide opportunities for deepened and extended engagement with one another around multi-faith matters of substance
- Enhance campus capacity through clarification of University units and the reformulation of advisory committee structures

In 2016-17 the CSRCS helped to advance the plan’s goals on many fronts but particularly with the launch of three major projects described elsewhere in this report:

- “On the Edge,” a scholarly symposium for the interdisciplinary study of religion, was successfully inaugurated in February 9-11, 2017
- The Interreligious Studies Minor was available for students for the first time and saw its first graduate
- The Multifaith Scholars Program welcomed its first class of six rising juniors
2016-17 CSRCS SPONSORED & CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

Sept. 9 Najib Ghadbian (Special Representative for the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces to the United States and United Nations), “The Face of the Syrian War and No End in Sight”

Sept. 13 Baris Kesgin, Safia Swimlar, Haya Ajjan (Elon University) and locally resettled refugees, “Refugee Voices from Syria”

Sept. 29 Amy-Jill Levine (Vanderbilt University), “Agreeing to Disagree: How Jews and Christians Read Scripture Differently”

Oct. 4 Jeffrey Pugh and Lynn Huber (Elon University), public discussion of Guide to the Endtimes: Theology for When You’ve Been Left Behind


Oct. 13 Lisbeth Melendez (Independent filmmaker), “Before God, We Are All Family,” film screening and discussion

Oct. 25 Shellen Wu (University of Tennessee, Knoxville and 2016-2017 National Humanities Center Fellow), “The Endless Frontiers of Science in Twentieth Century China.”

Nov. 15 Vivian Johnson, “Hope, Peace, Reconciliation and Love: The Messages of Marc Chagall in His Artwork and Literature”

Nov. 16 Andrew Mbovi (Shaw Dinity School) “Minoritized Scholars and the Re-Shaping of Western Disciplines: A View from an African in Biblical Studies”

Feb. 9-11 “On the Edge of Apocalypse,” Scholarly Symposium

Feb. 19 Film: “May Allah Bless France,” with discussion by Ariela Marcus-Sells (Elon University)

Mar. 8 Ami Hussain (Loyola Marymount University), “Muslims and the Making of America”


Apr. 27 Kevin Johnson (Spelman College), “Jubilation!: Celebrating the Gospel Jubilee Tradition”

Apr. 29 Spelman College Glee Club, “Lift Every Voice and Sing!”

May 3 Zev Hardt (Cleveland State University), “A Conversation with A Holocaust Survivor”

BEST WISHES & MANY THANKS, ELIZABETH!

We were overcome with mixed feelings as we bade farewell and good luck to our Communications Intern, Elizabeth Zimmerman. Elizabeth had worked for two years on various communications and research projects for the center, including graphic design, social media, event publicity, and news writing. She helped establish many of the ongoing strategies and practices of the CSRCS, and we are very grateful for her many contributions. We would not be the same without her. We wish Elizabeth all the best as she takes up her first post-college job: Communications Specialist with the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium—how cool!

CSRCS Advisory Committee

Clyde Ellis
Professor of History

Lynn Huber
Professor and Chair of Religious Studies

Jeffrey Pugh
Professor of Religious Studies

Evan A. Gatti
Associate Professor of Art History and Director of the Core Curriculum

William Moner
Associate Professor of Communications

Ariela Marcus-Sells
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Distiguished Emerging Scholar

Jan Fuller
University Chaplain, Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life

Mina Garcia-Soormaly
Associate Professor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages and Cultures

Rissa Trachman
Associate Professor of Anthropology and Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
(The Chagall Dreams painting by Elena Kotliarker, whose contemporary Judaica artwork incorporates embedded Kabbalah symbols and icons)