



Department of Religious Studies 50th Anniversary Events March 28-29, 2017

This year marks fifty years since the Department of Religious Studies (first established at the University of Alabama in 1932) was reinvented to meet the widely adopted requirements of the academic study of religion as practiced in a US public university: promoting the non-confessional study of religion as a cross-cultural human phenomenon. While the Department has continued to develop since then, this tight focus on studying people—their beliefs, behaviors, and institutions—remains central to our mission and our success.

To mark this milestone, the Department will showcase the accomplishments of three groups: our students, our graduates, and our faculty. You are invited to attend and learn more about the work being done at the University of Alabama as we celebrate together the lasting effect we have had on our students and our graduates.

Tuesday March 28

Faculty Lectures: Remaking Religious Studies, Past and Present

2:00 – 3:30 pm, Gorgas 205; Dr. Merinda Simmons (presiding); Dean Robert Olin and Dr. Patrick E. Green (introductory remarks)

“Studying Religion in Alabama: Religious Studies as a Department and a Discipline”

- Dr. Mike Altman

“Critical Caretaking: Religious Studies Among the Humanities at the University of Alabama”

- Dr. Ted Trost

Wednesday March 29

4th Annual REL Undergraduate Research Symposium

9:30 am - 12:30 pm, Gorgas 205; Dr. Matt Bagger (presiding); all sessions featuring current undergraduate REL majors and minors, presenting their original research, carried out under the supervision of their professors.

Wednesday March 29

Alumni Panel: Critical Thinking Beyond the Classroom

6:00 - 7:30 pm, Gorgas 205; Dr. Mike Altman (presiding)

Presentations and panel discussion featuring recent REL graduates, all of whom have gone on to succeed in a wide variety of careers, focusing on the continuing value of their undergraduate degrees at UA.

The grads participating are:

Keli M. Brothers (formerly Vazquez) graduated with an REL minor and a Psychology major in 2009 and is currently a Doctoral Candidate at Argosy University Online, and works as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Kim Davis is a 2003 BA graduate in Religious Studies and French who also earned an M.A. in French Applied Linguistics and a Masters degree in Secondary Education in Language Acquisition in French (all from the University of Alabama); she currently teaches French and Mythology at Tuscaloosa County High School.

Dan Mullins is a 2008 BA graduate in Religious Studies and Anthropology, with an M.A. in Anthropology (from the University of Alabama) and a Ph.D. (from Oxford University). Dan is a London-based anthropologist employed as a Research Fellow in Digital History at University of Hertfordshire and is a Visiting Scholar at Oxford University.

Samantha Sastre graduated in 2006 with a major in REL and minored in English and Computer Applications while at UA; she is an inside sales representative for Gemu Valves in Atlanta, GA. She enjoys writing, cooking, a good beer, and the great outdoors.

Brett Saunders graduated in 2014 and majored in Religious Studies (with a minor in English). After living in Colorado post-graduation, Brett moved to Naperville, IL, where he now works for a non-profit Christian organization aiming to reach junior high and high school students.

We hope you join us at one or all of these events; light refreshments will be provided at each.

*REL's 50th anniversary events are supported by the generosity
of the College of Arts & Sciences.*

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