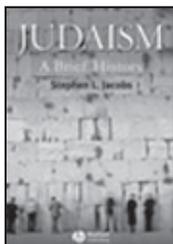




# What's New in Religious Studies?

## NEW FACULTY BOOKS



### *Judaism: A Brief History*

**Steve Jacobs's** forthcoming volume is a concise and readable overview, directed at general readers and students alike, which surveys Judaism's history and its historymakers—looking at Jewish philosophy, practices, institutions and contemporary issues confronting the Jewish people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



### *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith*

Co-edited by **Russell McCutcheon** and Willi Braun (University of Alberta), this collection of scholarly essays highlights the contributions of the University of Chicago's influential scholar and teacher and our 2003 **Aronov Lecturer**.



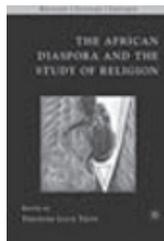
### *Studying Religion: An Introduction*

Just as the Department's 100-level introduction to the study of religion is something other than your typical survey of the world's religions, so too **Russell McCutcheon's** little book tackles the problem of definition—how it is that certain parts of human worlds are seen as interesting enough to describe, compare, and explain.



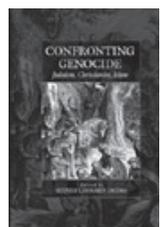
### *Representing Religion: History, Theory, and Crisis*

**Tim Murphy's** collection of essays explores the implications of what is commonly called the crisis of representation: if scholars no longer see words and concepts to correspond to stable meanings and identities, then is it possible to study religious beliefs, behaviors, and institutions as we did in the past?



### *The African Diaspora and the Study of Religion*

Growing out of the Department's 2005 international conference, **Ted Trost** has edited this collection of essays by the participants in that event, highlighting the work of younger scholars who are all interested in the ways that identities move and change over time and place—our own **Maha Marouan** being one of the contributors.



### *Confronting Genocide: Judaism, Christianity, Islam*

**Steve Jacobs's** upcoming edited volume is among the first to address religion—both as a system of thought and as an institutional system—as a key factor that can contribute to the implementation, perpetuation, and justification for acts of genocide.

## STUDENT NEWS

### *Silverstein Fellows, 2007-8*

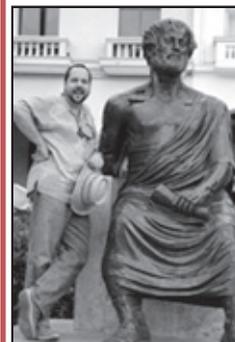


Thanks to the **College of Arts & Sciences** and the Department's **Silverstein Endowment**, we once again hired students to help out in the main office and to assist the faculty with their projects. Our student workers (pictured above, from left to right) are now known as Silverstein Fellows: **Jaci Gresham**, **Harrison Graydon**, **Sarah Kelly**, and **Chris Hurt** (pictured in the Department's Library).



**Dan Mullins** (left), a graduating senior double-majoring in Anthropology, joined the ranks of Silverstein Fellows in the Spring 2008 semester, assisting Prof. **Ted Trost** (right) with his large enrollment section of REL 100 Introduction to the Study of Religion. For several years the Department has benefited from student workers assisting in courses that seat up to 170 students—courses that help the College to offer a sufficient number of seats to incoming first year students.

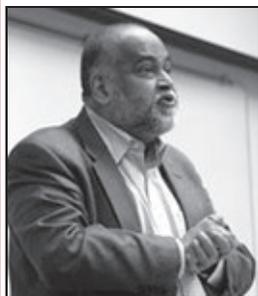
### *It's Greek to Us!*



REL majors **Chris Hurt**, **Sean Beadore**, **Jaci Gresham**, and **Keke Pounds** are joining Professor **McCutcheon** (pictured with **Aristotle**) in Greece, for twelve days in May, as a pilot project to see if the Department will begin regularly offering a study abroad program in the summers. (Thanks to **Capstone International** and the **College of Arts & Sciences** for helping to fund the trip.)

## GUEST SPEAKERS

### The Annual Aronov Lecture



This year's **Aronov Lecturer** was Prof. **Arjun Appadurai**, the noted anthropologist and scholar of globalization from The New School in New York City. (Photo courtesy of

Adam Smith of the *Crimson White*). His lecture, which followed a lunchtime discussion with members of the REL and Anthropology departments, was entitled "The Offending Part: Sacrifice and Ethnocide in the Era of Globalization." Thanks to the many units which helped REL to bring Prof. Appadurai to campus.



Along with participating in a lunchtime discussion with our students, Prof. **Herb Berg** (University of North Carolina, Wilmington) delivered a public lecture in mid-April, as part of our Honors Week events. His lecture, which focused on the scholarly quest for the historical Jesus, and its similarities and differences from the scholarly quest for the historical Muhammad, was held in Gorgas Library.

### Lunchtime Discussion Series



We continued our lunchtime discussion series for majors and minors, featuring, among others, Prof. **Michael Murphy** (left), Chair of Anthropology, and Prof. **DoVeanna Fulton** (left), the new Director of African American Studies. We've entered the fifth year that students have come out for our lunchtime discussions with guests and current faculty. Provid-



ing student lunches is made possible by



**Goodwin Endowment**, which supports student activities, such as our student association's monthly pizza and movie nights.

## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



Prof. **Maha Marouan** published another peer reviewed essay, in the prestigious *Columbia Journal of American Studies*, on David Bradley's novel, *The Chaneyville Incident*. Read the web version of the essay at: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cjas/chaneyville1.html>. This Fall Prof. Marouan will offer her upper-level seminar on fiction throughout the African Americas.



Prof. **Steven Ramey's** first book has been contracted; this revision of his doctoral dissertation is on the ways in which the differences and similarities among Hindu, Sikh, and Sufi social identities are managed. In the upcoming Fall semester, he'll be offering his survey of Islam for the first time.



Often, courses in the study of religion are mainly descriptive and comparative; rarely do scholars press on to *explain* the similarities and differences that their scholarship makes apparent. That's why Prof. **Murphy's** new course, Theories of Religion—offered this coming Fall for the first time—is such an important addition to our curriculum. **News Flash:** Prof. Murphy just received tenure and a promotion. Congratulations, Tim!



Although he was still in town periodically, Prof. **Jacobs** was on sabbatical for the Spring 2008 semester; without teaching obligations, he was able to make significant headway on several writing projects and returns in the Fall semester, offering our Honors 100-level course and a new seminar on religion and politics in the Middle East.



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**Honors Day 2008** was once again a chance for the Department to recognize some of its outstanding students by awarding them **Silverstein Scholarships** (valued between \$250 or \$1,000). The food for our traditional luncheon on balcony of Manly Hall arrived in time this year!

Next year's **Aronov Lecture** is now being planned by Prof. **Ramey**; although the date is still to be determined, our speaker will be the University of Chicago's noted historian of religions, Prof. **Bruce Lincoln**.

Visit [www.as.ua.edu/recurrentstudents.html](http://www.as.ua.edu/recurrentstudents.html) to learn who this is and why she's a Religious Studies major.



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

- Melanie Williams** (2006) graduated from cooking school in Vancouver and will be a chef in Alaska for the summer.
- Marianne Stanton** (2005) and **Sarah Luken** (2007) are each getting married this Spring—Marianne in Texas and Sarah here in Alabama.
- Mark Premo Hopkins** (2003) is lawyering in Texas (he's also a dad).
- Karissa Rinas** (2007) is doing web design in Tuscaloosa.
- Barclay Owens** (2007) is in graduate school at Vanderbilt.
- Tim Davis** (2007) is currently a Spanish teacher in Tuscaloosa and his big sister **Kim** (2003) is in a Masters of Education at UA.
- Look for Yonder Mountain Outfitters in Atlanta, **Brooks Harvard's** (2007) new store.
- Jennifer Alfano** (2007) is working on her Master of Education and **Justin Nelson** (2007) is working in a new business in Birmingham. Oh yeah, they're also engaged.