Abdel-Latif, Sara Ahmed

Sara is a PhD student working on notions of exegetical authority in the Sufi tradition of Qur’anic commentary. She studies philosophical and mystical notions of the realized sage and is interested in the methodology underlying different approaches to interpreting the Qur’an. She hopes to become a professor in the field of Sufism and the Qur’an one day.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Ali, Khalidah
Khalidah is a PhD student in Islamic Studies. Her main interests are modern Islam in Egypt, Islamic Reformism, Islamism, and gender. Her proposed dissertation research is on the history of women’s activism in the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Alikhan, Roahil

Rohail is an MA student exploring the concepts of demonic possession, magic, jinn, exorcism, and the spirit world in Islam. He aims to fill the gap in modern research by examining the sources considered authentic by classical and “orthodox” scholars of Islam and exegetes of the Qur’an.

Anthony, Zoe

A PhD student, Zoe comes to Toronto from Chicago. Her interests constellate around the continental philosophy of religion and method and theory in the study of religion. In the former field she is interested in seminal figures of the modern German intellectual tradition, including but not limited to Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger. In the latter field, she is interested in both the history of the development of the study of religion, and contemporary attempts to rethink the methodological identity of the academic study of religion, and she is thus interested in both “classical” and “contemporary” method and theory. She seeks interdisciplinary avenues through which the philosophy of religion can contribute to discussions about representation, belief, ethics and identity.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Arno, Martin

Martin Arno is a PhD student. He holds a BA from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a MA from the University of Chicago. He is interested in the significance and dimensions of curses in the development of the early Christian movement, as well as papyrology and textual criticism in antiquity.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Baillargeon, Danielle

Danielle is a doctoral student at the University of Toronto. She received her BA and
Master’s at the University of Calgary. Her research focuses on images of women in Roman and early Christian art. Danielle’s project will investigate the artistic depiction of women’s religious activities in early Christian funerary art.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Bartel, Rebecca

Rebecca C. Bartel is a PhD Candidate in the Department for the Study of Religion and the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies. Her dissertation research considers the co-constituting realms of faith and finance in Colombia. Rebecca is particularly interested in the everyday practices of Debt and Prosperity in a financializing market where new ways of believing accompany new structures of finance.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Beiles, Greg

Area of research: Phenomenology of Religion; Biblical and Midrashic Literature.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Belfon, David

David is a PhD student at the Department for the Study of Religion and the Centre for Jewish Studies. He is interested in the mechanics of conversion and deconversion in contemporary Canada, with regard to formerly ultra-Orthodox Jews who have become disaffiliated from their communities. His project addresses questions of how social and religious boundaries and the institutionalization of religious identity relate to apostasy.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Bell, Brigidda

Brigidda completed her BA in 2009 and her MA in 2011, and began her PhD immediately after. Building on her master’s project which critiqued the model of the decline of prophecy prevalent in New Testament scholarship, her doctoral work focuses on the construction of authority through prophecy in the ancient
Mediterranean region, and particularly within the early Christian church. Brigidda was born in Toronto but spent most of her childhood in Ecuador, returning to Toronto for her undergraduate education. She appreciates when her name is pronounced ‘bridge’-ih-duh and the first syllable carries the emphasis. Brigidda can be reached at brigidda.zapata[@]utoronto.ca

**Bhatt, Kalpesh**

Kalpesh Bhatt is a PhD student in the Department for the Study of Religion, Centre for South Asian Studies, and Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies. He received his Masters from Harvard University. His research focuses on the function, value, and relevance of pre-modern Hindu texts in modern contexts, and the interaction of Hindu theology and neo-Vedantic worldviews with the daily lives of those who hold them.

**Bonney, Nathan**

Nathan is a PhD student, studying in the field of Religion, Ethics, and Modern Thought. His research interests include continental philosophy of religion, theories of subjectivity and subject formation, and ethics and responsibility in the thought of Emmanuel Levinas. He received his BA in English Language & Literacy from the University of Waterloo and his MA in Philosophy from the Institute for Christian Studies. He plans to complete his dissertation on religion and ethics in the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida.

**Boron, Usmon**

Usmon is a PhD student in the Department for the Study of Religion. He received his BA in Arabic Language and Literature from Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies and has recently completed MA in Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University. Usmon’s MA thesis focused on sectarianism and religious conflicts in contemporary Egypt. His academic interests also include anthropological approaches to religion and the Middle East, Islam, secularism, and nationalism.

**Brahmbhatt, Arun**

Arun Brahmbhatt holds a BA in Comparative Religion and English from Tufts University, and an MTS in South Asian Religions from Harvard Divinity School.
Arun is a doctoral student in the DSR with a collaboration in South Asian Studies. His research is focused on the intersection of textual practices and the formation of religious identity in early colonial India, with special reference to Sanskrit commentarial texts produced in the Vedanta tradition in Gujarat.

Bright, Jennifer

Jennifer Bright holds a BA in Religion, Literature and the Arts from the University of British Columbia and a MA in Religion and Modernity from Queen’s University, Canada. Her primary interests are Tibetan religion, medicine and gender, and she is currently researching the intersection of Tibetan Buddhism and medicine in the contemporary literature and practice of women’s health in Xining, China. She has variously lived in India, Nepal and China for over three years.

Brown, Ian

Ian received his BA (Honours) from the University of Manitoba in 2009, and an MA in Religious Studies from the University of Regina in 2011. His research centers mainly on Early Christianities, especially the Gospel of Thomas, but also includes Post-Colonialism and Method and Theory in the Study of Religion.

Brunton, Judith Ellen

A PhD student at the University of Toronto, Judith Ellen Brunton is an aspiring scholar of religion and the public sphere in Canada, specifically investigating the way spiritual and public health outreach are interventions in the mental health of young people living in moral spheres shaped largely by the economy. For Judith, her academic research stems from a dedication to the value of cultural diversity and difference, and need to render the familiar strange. In addition to her research, Judith is engaged with other aspects of the university community as a co-director of The Elements Experiment, a volunteer for the Religion in the Public Sphere initiative, and as a junior fellow at Massey College.

Callon, Callie

Callie is a PhD candidate at the Department for the Study of Religion. She received
both her BA and her MA from the University of Toronto, specializing in Christian Origins. Her research interests include Greco-Roman social and cultural history, and how early Christian texts (both canonical and apocryphal) reflect this compositional setting. More specifically, her dissertation will examine the use of physiognomic theory as polemical strategy in early Christian texts. email: callie.callon@mail.utoronto.ca

Carwana, Brian

Brian Carwana’s research focuses on conservative Christianity in Canada and its interaction with the political sphere. He looks primarily at Christian lobby groups in Canada and how they relate to and are affected by the Canadian state. His research intersects with three main areas: (i) contemporary conservative Christianity, including its social-historical constitution and development; (ii) secularism, as it pertains to the public sphere, the secularization thesis and its critiques, and the ways that different traditions are affected by and sometimes help drive modernity; and (iii) religion and sexuality, with a primary focus on the role that sex, family, and gender issues play in contemporary politics and in establishing boundary markers for both conservative Christians and liberal secularists. Methodologically, his approach draws primarily on historical sociology.

Chattoo, Saliha

Saliha is a PhD student who studies the anthropology of Christianity. She completed her BA in Anthropology and Classics at the University of Alberta and her MA in Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her doctoral work examines young American evangelicals’ participation in annual performance-based conversion events and the processes of socialization, education, and identity formation therein.

Christian, Michelle

Michelle is a doctoral candidate whose interests include Christianity in the Roman empire, the Roman economy, economic history, and the anthropology of money. Her dissertation explores the construction of value in the gospels.
Clanfield, Amy

Amy Clanfield is interested in how social restrictions and rules governing sexuality and gender were used as tools for social cohesion and group boundary markers within the early Jesus movement (1st and 2nd century CE).

Dissertation, publications, etc

Cohen, Tamara

Tamara joined the Department for the Study of Religion as a PhD student in the fall of 2014. She has a background in the Visual Arts and Cultural Theory, with an MA in Art History from the University of Toronto and undergraduate degrees in Art Education, Studio Metals and Sociology.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Colpitts, Alison

Alison is a PhD candidate in religious ethics. She received her Master of Arts from the University of Chicago and her Bachelor of Arts from McGill University. Alison’s academic interests stem from the question of how religious individuals participate in the political sphere. Placing that question in an ethical framework, she is exploring the dynamic and dialogic relationship between one’s faith and one’s state. She will ask these questions both broadly and specifically with regards to the Christian faith and the Western democratic state.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Cornthwaite, Christopher

Christopher is a PhD student. He is interested in movement and connections between ethnic-territorial identity and religion in voluntary associations in antiquity.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Cwikla, Anna

Anna is a PhD student at the DSR. She received her BA in Religion from the

http://religion.utoronto.ca/people/grad-students/
University of Manitoba in 2011 and an MA in Religious Studies from the University of Alberta in 2013. Her research is focused on the Nag Hammadi codices, discourses of orthodoxy/heresy in early Christianity, and the portrayals and functions of female characters in non-canonical texts.

Dasios, Maria

Maria is a PhD student at U of T’s Department for the Study of Religion. She is particularly interested in religious conceptions of materiality, contemporary and late antique. Her research explores how word and image, as well as body, are conceived as sacred material in a broad tradition of Greek patristic works. In this vein, crucial sub-fields of interest include asceticism, pilgrimage, hagiography, rhetoric, apophatic theology, and Byzantine iconography and icon theory. Previously a student of comparative literature, Maria also retains a keen interest in the intersections of religion with literature and philosophy.

de Bruijn, Bonnie

Bonnie is a PhD Candidate in Religion at the University of Toronto. She received her BA and MA from McGill University. Her current research interests include psychoanalytic interpretations of religion and culture, philosophy of religion, contemporary critical theory, feminist theory and gender studies, with special focus on Julia Kristeva.

Deighton, Rose


Derkson, Kyle

Kyle Derkson is a doctoral student whose research combines method and theory in the study of religion, philosophy of religion, and cognitive theories of religion and
rationality. He is currently interested in exploring how various theoretical frameworks theorize religion and religious language and how these methods affect religious discourse in the public sphere.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Eaghll, Tenzan

Tenzan received his BA and MA from the Department of Religion at the University of Calgary, where he was trained in Early Modern intellectual history and Continental Philosophy. His PhD dissertation analyzes the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy’s work on the Deconstruction of Christianity. This work explores the way in which Christianity deconstructs and unravels its own dogma and theological foundations from within. For more information see utoronto.academia.edu/TenzanEaghll.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Erlich, Andrew

Andrew Erlich is a PhD student who received his BA from the University of Saskatchewan and his MA in Buddhist Studies from the University of Toronto. His current work focuses on the role of medicine in the rise of the Gelug sect to power in the 17th century.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Fardelos, Larissa

Larissa is an MA student in the Department for the Study of Religion. Her proposed thesis explores spiritual teachings for women in Indian Vajrayana Buddhism. She approaches her study utilizing both anthropological methods as well as primary text interpretation.

Feller, Yaniv

Yaniv is a PhD candidate in collaboration with the Centre for Jewish Studies. He received his MA (Political Science and German Studies) and BA (Integrative
Program: Philosophy, Political Science, Economics and Honors Program in Humanities) from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has also studied at the Freie Universität Berlin and UCLA.

Dissertation, publications, etc

**Fernando, Nigel**

Nigel is a doctoral student at the Department for the Study of Religion working on the history of ideas in early modernity. He finished his BA in history and religion at the University of Toronto and then completed his Master’s thesis at the DSR on Causality in Kant’s Pre-Critical Writings. His doctoral project centers on the emergence of autonomy in rationalist philosophy.

Dissertation, publications, etc

**Fewster, Gregory**

Greg is a PhD student at the DSR, in collaboration with the Book History and Print Culture Program. His research asks questions about Paul as an Author and Pauline pseudepigraphy, with a more general focus on the intersection of early Christian material culture and critical theory.

Publications

**Field, Nicholas**

Nicholas is a doctoral student researching Tibetan and Chinese correspondence networks and Buddhist scribes on the medieval Silk Road. More generally, he is interested in Tibetan Buddhism, medieval Chinese history, codicology, mapping, and letters. He is also enrolled in the collaborative program in Book History and Print Culture.

Dissertation, publications, etc

**Fisher, Amy Elizabeth**

Amy Fisher earned her BA (Honours) in Religion and her MA in Religion and Modernity from Queen’s University in Kingston. At the PhD level, she is interested
in the anthropology of Christianity and the political economy of religion in order to support ethnographic research among ‘missional’ evangelicals who work in urban homeless shelters.

Fisher, Amy Marie

Amy Marie Fisher is a doctoral candidate at the DSR and a collaborator with the Centre for Jewish Studies. Amy Marie’s dissertation explores the myriad spaces and places of the heavenly realms of antiquity. In order to stay grounded amongst all these celestial charts, Amy Marie spends her summer as the assistant field director of an archaeological dig in the Northern Galilee. Amy Marie devotes all other free time to drinking tea and writing letters.

Franz, Marisa Karyl

Marisa Karyl Franz is a doctoral student at the University of Toronto, and holds an AB from Bryn Mawr College and an MA from the University of Chicago. Her research focus is on the representation of religion within museum spaces in Russia. In particular, her dissertation research examines the history of the presentation of Siberian shamanic artefacts within the Soviet Union and, later, the Russian Federation.

Gahan, Jairan

Jairan is a PhD candidate at DSR. She completed her MA in cultural studies in EFL University, Hyderabad, India. Her research interests include exploring new possibilities of feminism outside the liberal frame work. She plans to focus on Iran and the conflictual relation between modernism, feminism and, Islam which grew stronger after the Islamic revolution.

Godrey, Liam
Liam is an MA student in the Department for the Study of Religion. His main area of interest is Continental/Enlightenment philosophy of religion, the critique of metaphysics, as well as the intersections between religion, ethics and psychoanalysis.

Grossano, Jackie

Jackie is a doctoral student in the area of Religion, Culture and Politics. She studies the history and anthropology of the Pentecostal movement. She received her MA from the University of Chicago and BA in Religious studies and Human Development from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Gulamadov, Shaftolu

Shaftolu is originally from Tajikistan and has attended schools and universities in Tajikistan, Russia, England and Canada. He earned his MPhil degree in Classical and Medieval Islamic History from the University of Oxford. His areas of interest include the role of Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia, classical Persian literature, Shi’i (particularly Isma’ili) socio-political history, and Sufism, and his main research interest is to study the religious literature of Pamiri Ismailis in Tajikistan. He enjoys learning languages, traveling and embracing and appreciating different cultures and customs, and has had the pleasure of visiting many countries in the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa, Eastern and Western Europe.

Hazelton, Barbara

Barbara Hazelton has a BA in Fine Art History and an MA in Buddhist Studies. Her research focuses on Tibetan epic literature and performance. She has lived for many years with Tibetan communities in Asia and Canada and is a practicing artist studying with a Tibetan Thanka painter in Toronto. She has a background in Tibetan visual imagery and ritual through studies with Tibetan scholars and ritual specialists.

Hillman, Sean

A Religion PhD student with a double-collaboration in Bioethics and South Asian
Studies, Sean uses Medical Anthropology to investigate intersections of religion and health, particularly at the end-of-life. An officiant and former Buddhist monk, Sean has spent 5 years studying in India and has been a caregiver since the mid-90s.

**Hipp, Rachelle**

Rachelle is a PhD student at the DSR. Her background includes an MA in International Relations with a concentration in Political Society and Culture in Southeast Asia (Waseda University) and more recently an MA in Religious Studies from Lancaster University. Her research interests are within the realm of Myanmar-Burmese Theravada Buddhism and include the topics of gender and Buddhism, monasticism, Abhidhamma, and Burmese Buddhism in the US.

**Hussain, Adnan**

Syed Adnan Hussain is a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at the University of Toronto, and received his BA from McGill University, an MTS from Candler School of Theology and a JD from Emory University School of Law. He is writing his dissertation on Modern Islamic State theory, which is a study of the confluence of the common law, constitutionalism and religious political theory. In particular he is interested in the case of South Asia, but is drawing comparatively on examples from the Middle East. Other areas of interest include human rights law, film, post-colonial theory, modern Islamic law, and the laws of apostasy and blasphemy. Beyond the books he is an obsessive cook, a recently converted cyclist, and a dabbler in just about anything he can get someone to teach him.

**Irshad, Mariam**

Mariam is interested in the field of Biblical Studies, the literature and religion of ancient Israel during the exilic and post-exilic Period and Second Temple Period in particular, especially the Pseudepigrapha.

**Ihilchik, Rebecca**
Rebecca Ihilchik is a master’s student at the Department for the Study of Religion. She holds a BA in creative writing from York University and is interested in the relationship between aesthetics and the Hebrew Bible.

**Kaden, David**

David is a PhD candidate who examines the connection between perspectives of law and cultural identity in early Christianity. Using J.Z. Smith’s method of comparison and redescription, his dissertation compares discussions of law in Matthew’s gospel and Paul’s letters with the Judean cultural practices authorized in Roman law, and with ethnographic data in the field of legal anthropology. The project draws on various theoretical perspectives including those of postcolonialism, cultural anthropology, M. Foucault, and C. Lévi-Strauss. This year David is a Chancellor Jackman Graduate Fellow upstairs on the tenth floor. David comes to U of T from Harvard.

**Kennedy, Robbie**

Area of interest: developing a case for Hermann Cohen’s book on critical philosophy, Ethics of Pure Will, being his highest expression and defence of Judaism.

**Khakzad, Delbar**

Delbar Khakzad is a PhD student in the DSR. She completed her MA in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Toronto, specializing in Temporality and Futurality in the Constitutional Revolution of Iran. Her main interests are modernity, nationalism, the perception of time, and the complex socio-political interactions of religious and secular trends in modern Iran.

**Kile, Chad**

http://religion.utoronto.ca/people/grad-students/
The title of Chad’s dissertation is “Ancient Christian Exorcism and the Culture of Graeco-Roman Ritual Expertise”.

Klaiber, Elizabeth

Elizabeth Klaiber began her post-secondary academic journey in Religious Studies at the University of Alberta, studying early Christianity in general and speaking in tongues in 1 Corinthians in particular. At the Institute of English Studies, University of London, England, she completed a Master’s in the History of the Book focusing on book burning in sixteenth and seventeenth century London. Now marrying the two degrees together, Elizabeth is reading for a doctor of philosophy at the University of Toronto’s Department for the Study of Religion in collaboration with the U of T’s Book History and Print Culture Program. Expanding the work of her Master’s thesis, Elizabeth researches book burning events as case studies through which to explore the broader themes of sacred space, theories of ritual and sacrifice, and the role of language and the book in religion.

Kleeb, Sarah

Sarah Kleeb is a PhD Candidate with the Department for the Study of Religion. Her research examines connections between religion and certain forms of dissent or protest, and the potential limits of dialogue within particular structures of religious authority. Consideration of these issues is grounded in the theoretical works of Frankfurt School Critical Theorists (particularly Horkheimer and Habermas), and is directed primarily toward the Latin American Liberation Theology movement.

Kozman, Rony

Rony Kozman is a PhD student at the Department for the Study of Religion in the field of early Judaism and Christianity. He is interested in how early Jewish and Christian communities used and interpreted Scripture.
Kuchuk, Nika

Nika is a doctoral student, registered also in the collaborative program in South Asian Studies. She holds her BA Honours in Psychology and MA in Religious Studies (University of Ottawa). Main areas of interest include: Hinduism, gender, theories of the self, embodiment and religious experience, transnational religion, translation, syncretic spirituality, goddess traditions, women’s religion, and comparative and cross-cultural approaches. She can be reached at nika.kuchuk@mail.utoronto.ca.

Laabdi, Mourad

Mourad is a PhD candidate writing his thesis about disagreement and diversity of opinion in medieval Islamic law. His other areas of interest include Medieval Islamic psychology, political philosophy, and contemporary anthropology of Islam. He holds an MA in Cultural Analysis from the University of Amsterdam and a BA in Linguistics from Ibn Zohr University, Morocco.

LaCoste, Nathalie

Nathalie is a doctoral candidate working primarily in the fields of Judaism and Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity. She works in collaboration with the Centre for Jewish Studies and is involved in the SCRA seminar. Her research interests include Hellenistic and Second Temple Judaism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Biblical wisdom traditions, and the uses of water in the Greco-Roman world. Twitter: @historyofwater • Email: nathalie.lacoste@mail.utoronto.ca • Website: www.nathalielacoste.com • Academia: utoronto.academia.edu/NathalieLaCoste

Lemieux, Catherine

Catherine, a doctoral candidate at the Department for the Study of Religion, received both her BSc and MSc from the Université de Montréal in Anthropology.
How the bioethics surrounding post-mortem artificial insemination can act as a modern solution to Levirate Marriage.

Loewen, Rachel

Rachel Loewen received her BA in Anthropology from the University of Western Ontario and earned her MA in Religious Studies from McMaster University. Her current work focuses on the relationship between the zabaleen (garbage collectors) in Cairo and the Coptic Orthodox Church. Her research interests include anthropological approaches to Christianity and the Middle East, material culture, gender, and minority studies.

MacCormick, Grace

Grace is an MA student at the Department for the Study of Religion. Her research focuses on the representation of women in Indian story literature with a particular interest in the ways in which the Sita narrative influences the stories told by women in Modern Indian society.

Macumber, Lindsay

Lindsay is a PhD candidate at the Department for the Study of Religion.

Mansfield, Gary

Gary Mansfield is a part-time graduate student in the collaborative program in the Center for the Study of Religion and the Center for Jewish Studies. His interests are
in the area of Jewish Law and Ethics with a focus on Maimonides.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Mawani, Adil

Adil is a PhD student interested in the study of religion and literature. With a focus on Islamic Studies and the Qur’an he seeks to examine the place of literary fiction in the study of religion.

Dissertation, publications, etc

McLelland, Kaleigh

Kaleigh is a Master’s student who explores the implications of religious pilgrimage on the formation and performance of a national identity in Canadian contexts. Her current research focuses on French Canadian Catholic communities and local pilgrimage to sites such as Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Québec.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Meisami, Sayeh

Sayeh Meisami is a PhD Candidate at the Department for the Study of Religion. She works in the field of Islamic Studies.

Dissertation, publications

Mo, Helen

Helen Mo received her BA, BEd, and MA from Queen’s University in Kingston and subsequently taught secondary school for four years. Her academic interest lies in how ethno-religious identity, lifestyles, and subcultures are formed; and more
specifically in the history and practice of Chinese evangelicalism.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Moore, Catherine

Catherine Moore is an MA student and is researching the religious conversions of a number of early twentieth century British writers, exploring commonalities and influences of their time and place.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Mueller, Mark

Mark Mueller is a PhD student with a focus on the religions of ancient antiquity. He is interested in the growth of monotheistic worship within the context of Greco-Roman religion, and its interaction with early Christianity and Judaism.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Mulhern, Aldea

Aldea is a PhD candidate in the study of religion and the collaborative program in Jewish studies. Her work focuses on the ideological underpinnings of alternative foodways emergent in two religious organizations, one Jewish and one Muslim, who are active in the Toronto food movement. Aldea is interested in lived religion, theory of comparison, and issues of power, gender, and ideology as they arise in economies of value. She studies religious food practice and discourse.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Nasser-Sunderji, Shanifa

Shanifa Nasser is a doctoral student at the Department for the Study of Religion and currently serves as the Research Coordinator for an interdisciplinary research team in the areas of Islam and Muslim Civilizations under the direction of Dr. Shafique Virani. Her interests include Islamic mysticism, Ismaili literature and thought, the
religious landscape online, and the emerging world of the digital humanities. In her spare time, she serves as a volunteer for the non-governmental organization, Focus Humanitarian Assistance.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Olfert, Ryan
Ryan is a PhD candidate in the Department for the Study of Religion. He primarily studies the ritual and disciplinary practices of the religions of the ancient Mediterranean, and his focus is how blood is a site of intersection of materiality and discourse in the formation of early Christianities.

Dissertation, publications, etc

O’Neill, Alexander
Alexander is an MA student at the Department for the Study of Religion and the Centre for South Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. He completed his BA (Hons) with high distinction at the University of Toronto in 2014. He is studying Sanskrit, Pali, and Newar.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Porter, Amelia
Amelia holds a BA (Hons) from the University of Toronto and an MTh in Biblical Studies from the University of Edinburgh. She is primarily interested in the New Testament parabolic corpus, with particular reference to their oral dimension. Other interests include the social history of early Christianity and historical Jesus research.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Radin, Jessica
Areas of interest: Contemporary interpretations of medieval Islamic thought; historical development of religious thought in Shi’a and Sunni Islam; the relationship between medieval Jewish and Islamic thinkers; Islamic and Jewish law;

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interpretation of Qu’ran and hadith.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Rattansi, Aly

Aly investigates the concept of sacred space from the perspective of Ismail’ism, drawing on a series of hitherto unexplored sources produced by it’s imamate and the community.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Ribeiro, Luiz Felipe

Luiz received his MA in Religious Sciences from Universidade Metodista de São Paulo, Brazil. In his Master’s dissertation he pursued the Second Temple Jewish Imaginary of Heavenly Ascent and Celestial Temple and its impact on Christian Origins. In his PhD, Luiz Felipe is occupied with more earthly pursuits. Researching under the advisory of Prof. John S. Kloppenborg, he is interested in the History of Sexuality in Early Christianity. Beyond the interest in the profane side of Early Christian Identity formation, Luiz Felipe diletantely cultivates his passion for Jazz and Latin American Fiction.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Richmond, Joel

Areas of interest: Sufism, Qur’an, and Islamic Philosophical Theology

Dissertation, publications, etc

Roberts-Zauderer, Dianna

Dianna is a PhD candidate at the Department for the Study of Religion and a collaborative graduate at the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto.
Her doctoral dissertation focuses on metaphor and the imagination in medieval Jewish thought, and how these ideas find their philosophical expression in Andalusian Hebrew poetry. She received both her Hon. BA and MA from the University of Toronto. Her MA major research paper explored philosophical concepts in medieval Hebrew ethical wills. Dianna can be reached at d.roberts.zauderer@utoronto.ca.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Ruecker, Michael
Michael is a PhD student working in the field of religion, culture, and politics. He has completed BAs in political science and religious studies at the University of Regina, and an MA in religious studies at the University of Ottawa. His research looks at the ways governments define and regulate religion, particularly among minority groups and outsiders, with a focus on the historical relationships between the Canadian government and First Nations.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Sadler, Cole
Cole Sadler is a PhD student at the Department for the Study of Religion and collaborative programme through the Centre for Jewish Studies. His area of focus is 20th-Century Jewish Existential Thought, focusing on the works of Emmanuel Levinas. Cole is interested in the Post-structural critiques of the Phenomenological tradition, as well as the relation of sensation in the philosophical tradition.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Scott, Anthony Robert
Born in the Badlands of Alberta, Tony pursued literature and philosophy degrees at the University of Calgary while working as an educator at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology; after entering the Centre for Buddhist Studies at the University of Hong Kong for a MBuddStud, he is currently a PhD student.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Sharma, Vishal
Vishal Sharma graduated with a First Class BA in Political Science from Glendon College, York University. As the son of a Hindu priest, religion has always been a
matter of great personal and academic interest to him. For the past ten years, Vishal has been studying the Krsna Yajur Veda traditionally. He is currently completing his Master of Arts in Religion. Vishal’s primary research interests are the Sanskrit epics and their inter-textual relationship with vernacular, puranic and non-brahmanical sectarian literature. In particular, he will be studying the death of Krsna in the Mahabharata’s Mausala Parvan and its relationship to Krsna’s death narrative in the later Puranic literature. Also passionate about Canadian politics, Vishal works for a government and public relations firm in Toronto.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Sherab, Kunga

Areas of interest: theories of transmigration found in a corpus of Indian texts focused on logic and epistemology, based on later Tibetan Buddhist commentaries

Dissertation, publications, etc

Sienna, Noam

Noam graduated from Brandeis University with a BA in Anthropology and Classics and an MA in Religious Education. His work focuses on the significance of henna ceremonies among Jewish communities in the Islamic world, as a lens for examining the creation of religious culture and the relationships between culture, religion, community, and identity. Other interests include Semitic linguistics, rabbinic text, eco-spirituality, and multifaith (esp. Jewish-Muslim) dialogue.

Snider, Caleb

Caleb is an MA student specializing in East Asian Buddhist traditions. He holds an MA in English Literature from the University of Ottawa and a Bachelor of Humanities from Carleton University. Prior to joining the department, he worked in Canadian trade publishing as an editor and researcher.

Sohal, Kiran

Kiran Sohal is working on her Master’s Degree at U of T in the area of Hinduism. Her academic background is a BA Honors in Religious Studies from the University

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of Western Ontario, and HR Management from Ryerson University. Her area of academic interest is in Yoga, gurus, and the Bhakti movement of North India during the 12th-14th century. Kiran keeps herself busy by teaching corporate yoga, meditation, and pilates classes in Mississauga.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Soufi, Youcef

Youcef completed a double honours undergraduate degree in History and Political Science at the University of Manitoba and went on to the University of Victoria to complete a Master’s in political science and the interdisciplinary program Cultural Social and Political Thought. During this time, he explored questions of pluralism in contemporary multicultural states, with a focus on religious diversity, and now wishes to delve into the history of Islamic legal thought.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Stange, Patrick

Patrick Stange is a PhD student, having recently completed his MA at the DSR. He is primarily interested in Greco-Roman scribal culture along with textual criticism, epigraphy, and papyrology. A California native, he received his BA in Classics from UC Santa Cruz.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Stein, Justin

Justin is a doctoral candidate. His dissertation work analyzes the production of spiritual practices called Reiki in Japan, Hawaii, and North America, focusing on the interplay among individual experience, social networks, and institutional forms. Justin’s research interests include transnational religion, new religious movements, and the relationship between religion, science, and medicine

Dissertation, publications, etc

Steinschneider, Eric

Eric Steinschneider is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Department for the Study of Religion and the Centre for South Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. He holds a master’s degree from Harvard Divinity School and a bachelor’s degree in Religion and Japanese from the University of Rochester. Eric’s academic interests
include the genealogy of religious modernities in South Asia, Tamil and Sanskrit intellectual history, and the historiography of Indic religious traditions. He has taught classes at the University of Toronto and most recently at Brandeis University on religious pluralism in contemporary India, hagiography in South Asia, and traditions of Hindu thought and practice.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Stoner, Ryan

Ryan is a graduate of the University of Oregon (BS Religious Studies (Hons)/Political Science) and Yale Divinity School (MAR Second Temple Judaism). His research focuses on the formation and development of “apocalyptic historiography” and related conceptions of the time in ancient Judaism.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Sum, Cheuk Shing

Howard Shane

Howard is an MA student at the DSR. His proposed study explores the historical exchanges between Chinese Esoteric Buddhism and Daoism in the medieval period. His interests include the study of ritual, Dunhuang materials and iconography.

Taleb, Ramzi

Ramzi works on Ibn Sab’in (d.1270), a twelfth century Muslim mystic and philosopher, examining some aspects of his metaphysics and mystical theology (Sufism), namely, questions in spiritual epistemology and ontology.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Tanous, Rami

Rami’s research focuses on the development of Biblical exegesis in the Syriac church as a reflection of major transformations undergone by Syriac Christianity in two main stages. It will first examine the transformation that Syriac literature went through due to the influence of Greek philosophy and theology. The second section
of the research will discuss aspects of the later encounter between Syriac Christianity and early Islam and examine the transformation of Syriac Christian literature and exegesis in response to Islamic theology.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Tebbutt, Andrew

Andrew is a PhD student working in the area of Religion, Ethics, and Modern Thought. He studied philosophy at Brock University (BA, MA) and at the Institute for Christian Studies (MA). Andrew is interested broadly in the themes of religion, language, and politics, primarily as they are taken up in the tradition of continental philosophy. His research is currently focused on Hegel’s philosophy of religion.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Tobias, Norman

“By day,” Norman Tobias is a tax lawyer, adjunct professor (Faculty of Law, Queen’s University) and author of Taxation of Corporations, Partnerships & Trusts (Carswell), now in its 3rd edition and a text that the Supreme Court of Canada has had occasion to cite. “By night” since 2002, Norman has pursued graduate studies in historical theology at the TST through the University of St. Michael’s College (USMC), studies that culminated in an MA in Theology from USMC in 2008. Norman is a PhD candidate, with CJS doctoral collaborative status. He received his BA from Amherst College (1975). Norman’s law office web address is www.tobiasandco.com.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Toews, Quila

Quila Toews is an MA student in the DSR completing a program in Buddhist studies. Her primary fields of interest are Burmese Buddhism, literature and gender. Her research focuses on locating the place of Buddhism within Burmese female-authored literature written between the 18th and 20 centuries.

Valliani, Ayesha

Having lived in Karachi, London, Dusseldorf, Dubai, and Toronto, Ayesha is
interested in questions of religious diversity, and how religious freedoms and rights are understood in different legal, political, and social contexts. Focusing on the 2012 N.S. decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, Ayesha will be considering how legal precedents influence religious diversity and individual rights in Canada.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Vearncombe, Erin

Erin received her BA (Honours) from Queen’s University (Religious Studies) in 2003 and her MA from the University of St. Michael’s College (New Testament Studies) in 2007. She is now at the dissertation stage of her doctoral studies, focusing on the role of clothing in the construction and communication of social identity in the context of the ancient eastern Mediterranean.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Veinberga, Dace

Dissertation title: Toward a Fragmentary History of Traditional Religion in Livonia

Dissertation, publications, etc

Weimer, Jade

Jade Weimer completed a BSc, a BA and an MA from the University of Manitoba and is currently a PhD student at the Department for the Study of Religion in the area of Christian origins. She studies liturgical and social history of the early Christian communities of Mediterranean antiquity and focuses her research on the musical practices of these groups. She is also interested in cognitive theory and the effects of musical practice on culture and social interaction.

Dissertation, publications, etc

Weatherdon, Meaghan
A PhD student in the DSR, Meaghan earned her BA in Religion and Law from Carleton University and her MA in Religion and Modernity from Queen’s University. She will be focusing on the relationship between environment, social justice, religion and Indigenous Knowledge. In particular she is interested in examining how Indigenous spirituality shapes contemporary environmental and social movements in Canada.

Wilkinson, Hannah

Hannah Wilkinson is an MA student, having previously studied at U of T for her undergraduate degree. She loves being in the middle of such a wonderful city while studying. In her down time, away from studying, she enjoys writing, a good cup of tea, and spending time with her dogs.

Yoreh, Tzemah

Tzemah Yoreh is a PhD student focusing on post-biblical wisdom literature. He has a previous PhD from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the Hebrew Bible, and has written many popular academic books for students of the Bible in his Kernel to Canon series.

York, Paul

His area of study is Kant’s philosophy of religion and environmental ethics. Favourite thinkers, aside from Kant, include Paul Waldau, Paul Tillich, Immanuel Levinas, James Rachels, David Loy, Peter Berger, Freud, Carol Adams, Tom Regan, and Thomas Berry. Paul is also interested in animals and religion, engaged Buddhism and eco-theology. His dissertation is on Kant’s Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason, and how that text may be applied to climate justice issues. He has been an activist for social and environmental justice, human rights and animal rights since 1988.

Yousif, Ashoor

As a PhD student, Ashoor’s research interest lies in the interdisciplinary study of religion, history, and literature. Building on his previous master’s degrees in
Christian Theology and Syriac Christianity, his doctorate project focuses on Middle Eastern (Syriac and Arabic) Christianity, Islam and Christian–Muslim relations during the early ‘Abbasid Iraq milieu (750-950 CE).

Dissertation, publications, etc