

Research Seminar Series on Religion

2022/2024

Tuesdays 5-6.30 p.m. (on TEAMS)

4 October 2022 Meet the Team: Introducing the team of lecturers in Theology and Religious Studies and their current research

1 November 2022 Dr Sadek Hamid, UWTSD

The Insider/Outsider Debate in the Study of Religion:
Fieldwork Notes from a Muslim Researcher

Abstract

The distinction between “insiders” and “outsiders” has been a longstanding debate within Religious Studies. Russell McCutcheon’s well known *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion* (1999), made a significant contribution to this issue by considering the numerous epistemic and methodological issues in the study of religion such as emic/etic distinctions, notions of “believing without belonging” and the existence of layered, contesting religious identities. This presentation outlines some of the theoretical and methodological challenges of conducting fieldwork among British Muslim communities when the researcher is both an insider and outsider and offers reflections on the ethnographic process.

Presenter Bio:

Dr Sadek Hamid is a Research Fellow for the ‘*Digital British Islam: How do Cyber Islamic Environments impact everyday life?*’ at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. He has held teaching and research positions at the Universities of Chester, Liverpool Hope, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. His publications include *Sufis, Salafis and Islamists: The Contested Ground of British Islamic Activism*, (2016), *Young British Muslims: Between Rhetoric and Realities* (2016), *British Muslims: New Directions in Islamic Thought, Creativity and Activism*, (2018).

14th March 2023

Dr Sneha Roy, post-doc research fellow at the
University of Edinburgh

Rewriting agency using representations of Buddhist
nuns in contemporary Myanmar

Abstract:

In this seminar, we shall explore the conceptual and contextual meanings of 'agency' in politically turbulent settings and the need to understand the agency within the social actors who conduct their activism from behind the drapes. Often times, victimhood and agency are assigned statuses based on one's social identities, for instance race, class, caste, gender. Feminist readings of agency have established that gender has a relational and interactive arrangement with agency, and this stands true in my study with the Buddhist nuns of Myanmar. Religion and gender too have a complex and dynamic relationship and understanding agency of those who contest and configure normative understanding of gender, religion and activism can offer great insights to several aspects of religious studies. The Buddhist nuns of Myanmar are a community of diligent activists who often challenge and reorient our understanding of agency, and through their accounts of activism to 'protect Buddhism and Myanmar', we will unpack layers of agency, victimhood and what lies in between.

Biography:

Dr Sneha Roy is a British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. Prior to that, she was the Programme Officer for Fellows at KAICIID International Dialogue Centre in Vienna. She completed her doctoral studies at University of Wales Trinity Saint David, specialising in Buddhist nun's participation in enabling and combating religious extremism in Myanmar. Broadly, her research looks into the complexity and politics around 'agency' in extremist discourses. During her BA fellowship, she is keen to explore the relationship between saffron and green politics in India.

9 May 2023

Dr Emily Leah Silverman, President of the American
Academy of Religion Western Region

Feminist Spiritual Resistance and Resilience of Jewish
Women of the Nazi Holocaust

Abstract

Her talk will be on her recent research on Feminist Spiritual Resistance and Resilience of Jewish Women of the Nazi Holocaust . Dr. Silverman investigates what does it mean and how do we define spiritual resistance and resilience. What can we learn about Spiritual Resistance and Spiritual Resilience from the stories of Jewish women survivors and those who died. She will discuss the qualities she has found of spiritual resilience and resistance and give examples from four or five women's lives. The first women Rabbi Regina Jonas (Born Berlin 1902-1944 Died Auschwitz) Etty Hillesum (Born Middleburg 1914 -1943 Died Auschwitz) Ester Berger Born Survivor , Born Alma Tannenbaum Survivor There are a few survivors of the Nazi holocaust alive and she wonders what can we learn from these women who both survived and died in the Nazi Holocaust We can apply their resistance and resilience to our present day crisis of climate change, war, nuclear war and possible economic collapse. Silverman questions what is the positive we can learn from these women's experiences. Dr. Silverman grew up surrounded by Jewish survivors and in her early research found little testimony and no feminist theology from Jewish women . Since Dr Silverman was a child she has listened to relatives and friends' parents share their story of survival. Her research has inspired her to become a Hebrew Priestess instead of a Rabbi. She personally sees part of her own spiritual resilience as reclaiming her subjugated tradition of the Hebrew Priestess

Bio statement:

Kohenet, Dr. Emily Leah Silverman is a visiting scholar at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. She is Past President of American Academy of Religion of the Western Region. She wrote her PhD with Feminist Theologian Rosemary R. Ruether and was the organizer and co-editor of her Festschrift, *Voices of Feminist Theology: Writing in Celebration of Rosemary Radford Ruether*. She also has published *Edith Stein and Regina Jonas: Religious Visionaries in the Time of the Death Camps*. Her forthcoming book, which came out of conference she organized as Program Director and Vice President of AAR/WR is called *Subjugated Voices and Religion*, co edited with Sudanese Feminist, is due out Fall 2023. She has been a lecturer at San Jose State University and taught at the GTU. She is on the steering committee of National Women Caucus AAR and serves as a wiki editor for 1000 women in Religion. She has lectured widely on the Feminist Theology of Spiritual Resistance. She has an M.Div from Harvard Divinity School, PhD from GTU and CAL. She is an ordained Kohenet (Hebrew Priestess) and received ordination from the Hebrew Priestess Institute.

Did Judas betray Jesus? In search for the origins of an invented tradition

Abstract follows later

Link to the Teams Tile:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3ad4875f5b516b42da94013e25519d98d5%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=3c9ff430-9453-44ba-a802-8a21fe4d358c&tenantId=4e0f11f9-046e-4505-9cb8-db2152311e21>

