

## Richard Rodriguez and The Role of the Public Intellectual in American Society

Richard Rodriguez continued a lecture series hosted by the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture on the role of the public intellectual in American society, speaking at University Place Conference Center at IUPUI on Saturday, October 16, 2004. Winner of the Peabody Award for his televised essays on “The News Hour” and recipient of the Frankel Medal (now the National Humanities Medal) for his writings and public talks, Rodriguez turned the crowd’s attention to the topic of “public” in the public intellectual.

“Because this series is meant both to attract public attention to an important part of our culture as well as address the need for scholars—most especially participants in the Young Scholars in American Religion—to see themselves as public teachers outside the ivory tower of academia, Rodriguez was the perfect choice,” said Philip Goff, director of the Center. “He can speak to the vexing issues of the day at several levels simultaneously, and do so in such a way as to inspire us all to deeper thought and public commitment.”

Earlier in the day, Rodriguez met with the participants of the 2003-04 and 2004-05 classes of Young Scholars. There they discussed his works, including his books *Hunger for Memory*, *Days of Obligation*,



and *Brown: The Last Discovery of America*. “I was grateful to have the chance to meet the person whose writing has become an indispensable component of my classes on American Catholicism,” said Amy Koehlinger of Florida State University. “I enjoyed the opportunity not only to hear him discuss his understanding of how his work relates to the work we do in the classroom, but also to share with him the reactions that my students have had to his purposefully-provocative writing.”

The session also engaged a discussion about the role of academics as public teachers. Catherine Brekus of the University of Chicago and mentor of the 2004-05 cohort caught the spirit of the conversation. “Despite nervous laughter when he criticized academic prose, we nodded in agreement when he urged us to share our insights into American religion with the wider public. This, after all, is why 28 of us converged on Indianapolis for four days—because we want to become better teachers and scholars,

and because we believe that our work is crucially important to civic culture.”

The public talk that evening drew a crowd eager to hear Rodriguez’s thoughts about the public intellectual. Turning their

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### Center to Host Reception at AAR in San Antonio

The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture will host a reception at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in November highlighting the work of centers and institutes studying religion in the United States. Organizations that will be represented this year include the Center for Religion, the Professions, and the Public, University of Missouri; the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, Wheaton College; the Institute for the Study of Emotion, Florida State University; and the Southwest Institute on Religion and Civil Society, University of New Mexico. Those attending the meeting who are interested in visiting with the directors of these centers and institutes are cordially invited to the reception which will be held on Saturday, November 20, 2004 between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. in Salon Del Rey South of the Hilton Palacio del Rio. (Please see pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter for more information about the organizations that will be represented at the reception.)

## A Word from the Director

Philip Goff

Although scholars from around the world employ the syllabi from the Young Scholars in American Religion Program to help shape their own courses, perhaps less known but equally significant is the scholarship that participants in the program produce. From Thomas Tweed's edited volume *Retelling U.S. Religious History to Themes in Religion and American Culture* edited by Paul Harvey and myself, the conversations begun in these seminars have proved fruitful in thinking about our scholarship and how we imagine the field. Dozens of publications—academic articles, book chapters, web sites—have their roots in the Young Scholars sessions dedicated to research.

It is that dual focus on teaching and research that has made YSAR such a successful program over the years. The sessions dedicated to teaching have revealed much about how our research shapes the classroom, while the seminars on research remind us that publication is merely an extension of our teaching, only now to a different audience. The common bifurcation made in academia does not reflect what we do.

If we take seriously our task as scholar-teachers, we must eventually land on that third line that triangulates our position in society: the public teacher. In the private session with the Young Scholars and in his public talk, Richard Rodriguez reminds us that we live in a non-academic world that needs us. This is where our skills at research and teaching come together most effectively. We can never forget that our audience is not simply the students in our classrooms or the scholars reading our work; we have a larger responsibility than that.

## Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture

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### Centers and Institutes Project Booklet

a directory of over thirty centers and institutes engaged in the study of religion in America

2004 booklet now available

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*Richard Rodriguez with participants in the Young Scholars in American Religion program*

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attention to what it means to be public and have a public voice, he reminded the audience of the tensions between the “I” and the “we” in American culture, including the ironies that exist between the two. Employing his own story as he does so well in his books and essays, Rodriguez wove together religion, race, education, ethnicity, sexuality, and class to offer us a better sense of ourselves within a multicultural society.

“One of the best lectures I have heard in my life,” said Stephen Prothero, professor of religious studies at Boston University and mentor to the 2003-04 Young Scholars Program. “Smart, provocative, heartfelt, controversial.”

The lecture will be available in its entirety at the Center’s web site.

Next year’s lecture will be presented by Jean Bethke Elshtain, author of over 200 essays in scholarly journals and journals of civic opinion, as well as such books as *Democracy on Trial* and *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World*. She also writes a regular column for *The New Republic*.

## Young Scholars 03-04 Finish Program

Young Scholars in American Religion 2003-2004 participants held their fourth and final seminar in Indianapolis October 14-17.

Selected from over sixty applicants, this outstanding group of early-career scholars came to the program from backgrounds as diverse as art history, American studies, sociology, history, education, and, of course, religious studies.

They met in Indianapolis in April and October of 2003 and 2004. Spring seminars were devoted to ideas and methods of instruction for courses in American religious studies, culminating in the development of course syllabi that are now available on the Center’s web site.

Fall seminars were devoted to participants’ scholarly research efforts, and, at this last meeting, each scholar presented a publishable research article to the larger group.

“Young Scholars was one of my most gratifying intellectual experiences,” said David Yamane of the University of Notre Dame. “The sessions were both exhausting and exhilarating, but above all, they were fun. Our seminar was truly a collegium.”

Danielle Sigler of Austin College in Texas also had positive things to say about the YSAR experience, calling it “the most productive interaction” of her academic career. “I feel far more connected to developments in the field of Ameri-

can religion,” added Sigler, “and look forward to working with everyone for years to come. I think we emerged from the meetings far more than colleagues—we are friends.”

## Young Scholars in American Religion 2003-2004



*back row (l) to (r): Doug Winiarski, Martha Finch, Kristin Schwain, Julie Byrne, David Yamane; center row: Kathleen Flake, Khyati Joshi, seminar leaders Ann Taves and Stephen Prothero; front row: Clarence Hardy, Danielle Sigler, Robert Brown, Rachel Wheeler*

## *Institute for the Study of Emotion*

Florida State University

John Corrigan, Director  
Ait Remillaid, Assistant to the Director

The ISE was founded in 2001 for the purpose of advancing multidisciplinary research on emotion and for translating that research into publications, classroom initiatives, and public programs. It is our hope that the ISE will serve as a platform for an array of projects, and that it will expedite communication of research across disciplines and abet the translation of scholarly findings into formats accessible by nonspecialists. As the new study of emotion progresses, we prospect a role in steering it towards its full potential as a pathway to understanding human life and culture, towards what it promises through rigorous academic investigation and creative exploration, towards its emergence as a truly twenty-first century project not confined to exclusivistic or elite disciplinary and professional discourses. The agenda of the Institute for its first five years includes projects in the areas of religious studies (religious hatred) as well as history and psychology (war and emotion). The lecture series for 2002-2003 is on the topic of gender and emotion, and will include speakers working in religious studies, psychology, women's studies, and history. The Institute is seeking funding for conferences and post-doctoral fellowships.

## *Center for Religion, the Professions, and the Public*

University of Missouri

Edmund Lambeth, Director  
Jill Raitt, Senior Research Fellow  
Tim Hill, Outreach Coordinator  
Ethan Henderson, Office Manager

Through research, curricular development, and outreach initiatives, the Center for Religion, the Professions, and the Public at the University of Missouri-Columbia examines issues surrounding the convergence of religious and cultural diversity, spirituality, ethics, and the professions. The Center aims to expand the scholarly knowledge about these issues in twenty-first century American society and to strengthen relationships between professionals and the diverse populations they serve.

Established in April 2003 with a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Center strives to understand how varied religious beliefs and practices can affect relationships between professionals and citizens. Vital to the Center's success is dialogue involving practitioners, members of the public, scholars, and religious leaders, which will foster greater understanding.

Scholarly research is the foundation upon which the Center's curricular development, teaching, and outreach initiatives are built. Interdisciplinary seminars give faculty and fellows the opportunity to examine the history of the professions, trends in education, and critical issues related to religion, culture, and values.

Residential fellows, whose efforts contribute to all the Center's activities, spend one semester researching and writing. Senior fellows are scholars or practitioners, while junior fellows are graduate-level students drawn from MU's professional schools and colleges.

Curricular development activities are designed to equip professional schools with strategies and materials for preparing students to work in an increasingly diverse society. After curricular assessments help identify needs of the professions, faculty and fellows develop materials to fill the voids. Materials are tailored for the teaching methods of each profession and will be available on the Center's website.

Lectures, workshops, and other public outreach events are used to disseminate the Center's research; to raise awareness of critical issues; and to gain insight and feedback from varied presenters and audiences.

The Center's website (<http://rpp.missouri.edu>) provides a variety of resources, including a daily roundup of news stories involving religion and the professions, original articles and features, bibliographies, links to online resources, a forum for posting comments and questions, and information about activities and events.

The Center's unique, interdisciplinary approach draws upon the experience of individuals from several professions and academic disciplines, including Business, Engineering, Health Professions, Journalism, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Religious Studies, and Social Work.

## Southwest Institute on Religion and Civil Society

University of New Mexico

Richard L. Wood, Director

Mozafar Banihashemi, Research Associate, focusing on religion and civil society in the U.S. and Islamic societies

The Southwest Institute on Religion and Civil Society focuses on the intersection of religion and democracy in the contemporary world. Current personnel focus on analyzing faith-based community organizing in the United States and on efforts to provide coherent Islamic intellectual grounding for the democratization project in Iran. SIRCS provides a forum for both specialized and public intellectual work on religion, politics, and the democratic public arena. Current work includes a study of congregational development through systematic engagement in the public arena, funded by the Ford Foundation and pursued in partnership with Interfaith Funders. Funding is currently being sought for a project on democratic currents in Islamic societies and a project on faith-based community organizing in Latin America. Richard Wood is author of *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America* (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

## Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals

Wheaton College

Edith L. Blumhofer, Director

Larry Eskridge, Associate Director

Katri Delac, Research & Resource Assistant

Mark A. Noll, Senior Advisor

The origins of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (ISAE) are traced to the efforts of evangelical historians Mark A. Noll of Wheaton College and Nathan O. Hatch of the University of Notre Dame, who were awarded a small grant from Lilly Endowment in 1979 to fund a conference on “The Bible in America.” The ISAE was officially created in 1982 through a planning grant from Lilly with Joel A. Carpenter as its first full-time director. Since that time, the Institute has sought to encourage academic reflection about the historic and contemporary role evangelicals play within American culture as well as to aid evangelicals in their understanding of their own tradition. The ISAE is a constituent program of Wheaton College with its own self-appointed advisory board. It funds the majority of its core operating expenses through endowment income, while relying upon grants from foundations and gifts from individual donors to cover the balance and fund ISAE-developed programs and projects.

There are a number of facets to the work of the ISAE—the Institute offers seminars on courses in American religious history for Wheaton College undergraduate and graduate students; sponsors lectures for the Wheaton community; produces a quarterly academic newsletter, the *Evangelical Studies Bulletin* (circulation, 1,500); maintains a website which provides information on ISAE news and projects as well as resources and links dealing with American evangelicalism (<http://www.wheaton.edu/isae>); and serves as a resource on contemporary American evangelicalism for the news media. Far and away, however, the most prominent aspect of the Institute’s work has been its series of research projects dealing with evangelicalism and the larger sphere of American religion. Over the last two decades the Institute has guided numerous major projects to completion and has been the driving force behind eighteen volumes illuminating such topics as revivalism, evangelical theological education, religion and American politics, the evangelical relationship to science, and evangelical views on money and materialism.

Volumes from recently-completed ISAE conferences include Grant Wacker and Daniel Bays, eds., *Foreign Seeds, American Harvest: The American Missionary Enterprise* (Alabama), as well as three separate volumes stemming from a just-concluded project on American Protestant Hymnody: *Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns and Evangelical Protestant Traditions in America* (Eerdmans), *Singing the Lord’s Song in a Strange Land* (Alabama), and *Sing Them Over Again to Me: Hymns and Hymnbooks in America* (forthcoming). Currently, the ISAE has a grant with Lilly Endowment for a project that explores the history and development of confessional “European” Christian traditions in North America and the manner in which they have interacted with evangelical forms of Christianity, and another grant with the Henry Luce Foundation: “The Changing Face of American Evangelicalism,” which explores the impact of post-1960s immigration upon the evangelical subculture.

## **Religion & American Culture, Winter 2005**

Part of the stated purpose of *Religion and American Culture* is to “explore the interplay between religion and other spheres of American culture.” The Winter 2005 issue exemplifies the many ways the study of American religion can illuminate so much of American life as the essays focus on class issues, the public park system, the social order, and education.

The issue opens with a Forum on “American Religion and Class.” The contributors—David G. Hackett, Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, R. Laurence Moore, and Leslie Woodcock Tentler—attend to the state of advances of critical inquiry into the issue of class—always apparently a kind of *bete noire* in wrestling with America. In the forum, they point to successful instances or beginnings of this study, identify obstacles and pitfalls, and raise other kinds of questions that might give us additional purchase in measuring the importance of class as related to American religion. The forum suggests fruitful directions the scholarship might take, and the authors lend fresh insights into the question of religion and class in America.

In her article on “Sacred Sites: Nature and Nation in the U.S. National Parks,” Lynn Ross-Bryant suggests that the parks have played a central role in the unifying discourse of America because of the close alliance between nature and nation in U.S. discourse. By approaching the parks as pilgrimage sites, one can examine the American values that have been embodied in them. As part of the comparative study of religions, the essay points to the usefulness of a heterogeneous, spatialized model for analyzing sacred places and applies the model to the study of American culture in order to understand more about how the embodiment of nature and nation in the national parks has worked as a unifying symbol while at the same time disclosing contested and conflicting values in American society.

“The Radicalization of the Social Gospel: Harry F. Ward and the Search for a New Social Order, 1898-1936,” by Doug Rossinow, examines the career of the Reverend Harry F. Ward as a means of describing the evolving nature and limits of social gospel radicalism during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Ward sought a new social order from the early years of the century through the Great Depression of the 1930s. He believed that this new order would transcend the competitive and exploitative capitalism that dominated American society in his time. Though Ward’s leftward trajectory and ever-stronger Communist associations would eventually bring about his political downfall, in the mid-1930s he remained a respected figure among American Protestant clergy, tied to the broader terrain of social gospel reform.

In the years between World Wars, public and religious educators struggled to define the appropriate nature of character education. A group of conservatives sought to shore up traditional values through morality codes. At the same time, a group of liberal progressive educators set forth a vigorous critique of these popular character education programs. David P. Setran’s article, “Morality for the ‘Democracy of God’: George Albert Coe and the Liberal Protestant

Critique of American Character Education, 1917-1940,” analyzes the nature of this liberal critique through a study of Coe, who forged a model of character education derived from liberal Protestantism and Deweyan progressive education. The essay argues that, in the end, Coe’s democratic model of character education failed to promote a truly democratic character.

# R&AC

RELIGION AND AMERICAN CULTURE  
*A Journal of Interpretation*

## Upcoming Issue

**Volume 15, Number 1**

**Forum: American Religion and Class  
with contributions by  
David Hackett, Laurie Maffly-Kipp,  
R. Laurence Moore, and Leslie Tentler**

***Sacred Sites: Nature and Nation  
in the U.S. National Parks*  
Lynn Ross-Bryant**

***The Radicalization of the Social Gospel:  
Harry F. Ward and the Search for a New  
Social Order, 1898-1936*  
Doug Rossinow**

***Morality for the “Democracy of God”:  
George Albert Coe and the Liberal  
Protestant Critique of American  
Character Education, 1917-1940*  
David P. Setran**

### R&AC Submission Guidelines

Address all manuscripts and editorial correspondence to Thomas J. Davis, Managing Editor, Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, Cavanaugh Hall 341, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140. All manuscript submissions, four copies of each typescript, should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Typescripts should be 25-35 pages in length.