

Young Scholars Meet in Indy

Two cohorts of the Young Scholars in American Religion Program met simultaneously in Indianapolis from April 21 to 24. The 2004-05 group is led by Peter Williams of Miami University and Catherine Brekus of the University of Chicago. The 2005-06 group is led by John Corrigan of Florida State University and Judith Weisenfeld of Vassar College. Although they gathered separately, the focus for each was classroom teaching.

The 2004-05 group came prepared with sample syllabi they had prepared over the past year. These syllabi will be available on the Center's web site beginning in June 2005 and will include each participant's justification for the structure of the course. Given the variety of teaching institutions—liberal arts colleges, state universities, seminaries, and research universities—as well as different disciplines and methods, these syllabi will prove helpful to a broad array of educators.

The weekend brought together for the first time the 2005-06 class of Young Scholars. (See pages three through nine for introductions to each participant.) "It is clear to me," said Sylvester Johnson of Florida A&M University, "that my career in religious studies scholarship is about to accelerate by leaps and bounds as a result of the

collaboration that will result from this group. I gained so much in one weekend."

Lila Corwin Berman of Penn State agreed. "I'm heartened that the

Young Scholars program devotes equal time to conversation about teaching and researching, indicating that our work in the classroom is as important as our work in the archive or in front of the computer. I so appreciated the chance to speak frankly about the challenges of teaching college students, and I learned a huge amount from the other scholars—a diverse group who teach at many different schools, from small religious colleges to large research universities."

Participants from both groups remarked how the sessions on teaching reach a much broader audience than simply those participating in the pro-

gram. "I benefited tremendously," said James Bennett of Santa Clara University, "but even more importantly, my students will benefit from the pool of knowledge that the Young Scholars Program generates." Sylvester Johnson added, "Not only will we as individuals move forward in our scholarship, but also the entire field of American religious studies will benefit."

As always, the intense discussions of the weekend were balanced

continued, page 3



Young Scholars in American Religion 2005-2006

Jean Bethke Elshtain to Speak at IUPUI October 14

The 2005 lecture in the Center's ongoing series, "The Role of the Public Intellectual in American Society," will be delivered by Dr. Jean Bethke Elshtain on Friday, October 14. Author of the controversial *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World, Power Trips and Other Journeys*, and *Democracy on Trial*, among others, as well as hundreds of journal articles, book chapters, essays, and book reviews, Elshtain is considered one of the country's most influential public intellectuals. She is The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at The University of Chicago, where her teaching and research areas include social and political theory and ethics (including the history of political thought), contemporary political and social theory, moral philosophy and women's studies, and the just war tradition. Elshtain will meet with the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 Young Scholars in American Religion groups while in Indianapolis for the lecture.

For further details about the lecture, including time and place, please see page 10 of this newsletter.

A Word from the Director

Nearly five years into my job here, I'm happy to say that I am pleased with the direction of things. Over the past two years the Center has added a number of fine scholars to its already impressive list of affiliated colleagues around the country—people who will be part of exciting new ventures in both our research and public teaching components.

Consider all those who joined us in 2004: Stephen Stein and Peter Williams came on board as co-editors of *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*; Rachel Wheeler and Peter Thuesen joined IUPUI's Religious Studies faculty and became research fellows of the Center as well as associate editors of the journal; and Rosemary Skinner Keller, Jan Shipps, and Arthur Farnsley became research fellows.

Now I'm pleased to announce the latest addition to our "family": Edward E. Curtis IV will join IUPUI as the Millennium Scholar of Liberal Arts and the Center as a research fellow in fall 2005. Curtis, formerly of Trinity College (TX) and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, is author of *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought* and significant articles in major research journals. He is presently at work on a book entitled *Becoming Muslim: Religion in Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam*. He teaches in African American religion and Islam. Needless to say, we are pleased and excited about his joining us.

Presently we are working on new projects that include the role of the Bible in American culture, how scripture is discussed in public education, and religious women and vocation, among other topics. Keep an eye on the Center's website over the coming months as we make further announcements about personnel as well as research and public teaching projects.

Philip Goff

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continued from page 1

While the new group will begin to piece together their own syllabi and justifications over the coming year, those presented by the 2004-05 class will be added to Center's web site. This brings the total to 81 syllabi for educators to consult as they think about their own courses in American religious studies. Dating back to the first group of Young Scholars (1991-93), these syllabi offer a variety of approaches to the topic and trace the development of the field during a period marked by increased interest in religion in North America. Containing useful bibliographies, web sites, and class exercises, they are a treasure trove of ideas for those who teach in this area.

As always, the intense discussions were balanced by a sense of fun. Like the Young Scholars groups before them, the 2004-05 and the 2005-06 classes have developed relationships that will prove fruitful long after the program is finished. "I'm thankful for the developing friendships our gatherings have enabled, which will long outlast our formal meetings," said Jonathan Baer of Wabash College. Perhaps John Schmalzbauer best explained why this program produces such relationships: "The Young Scholars Program is like being in graduate school again, but without the anxiety



What do the Young Scholars in American Religion have in common with Darth Vader and Chewbacca? All were gathered in Indianapolis April 21-24, as the Young Scholars seminar coincided with the Star Wars Convention. Photos like these abounded over the weekend.

Meet the

Young Scholars in American Religion

2005-2006



Julius H. Bailey is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Redlands in California. He earned his B.A. from Occidental College and his M.A. and Ph.D. in American Religious History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He teaches courses on American religion, African American Religious History, New Religious Movements, and Race, Ethnicity, and Religion. His book, *Around the Family Altar: Domesticity in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1865-1900* (University Press of Florida, forthcoming 2005) examines the efforts of AME Church leaders and laity to apply notions of domesticity to particular challenges facing the denomination such as regional tensions, the restoration of families after slavery, the licensing of female preachers, the spiritual nurture of children, and the religious life of the home. He has recently completed a chapter entitled "Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and the Racial Dimensions of Motherhood" for an edited volume, *Feminist Mothering* (Forthcoming 2006) and several entries for the *Encyclopedia of African American Literature*. He is currently working on a chapter for *Black Religion and the Body*.

continued, page 4



Courtney Bender is Assistant Professor of Religion at Columbia University, where she also holds a courtesy appointment in the Department of Sociology and is a faculty fellow of the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy. Bender received her B.A. from Swarthmore College with honors in religion and sociology-anthropology, and her Ph.D. from Princeton in sociology. She is the author of *Heaven's Kitchen: Living Religion at God's Love We Deliver*, published by the University of Chicago Press 2003, an ethnographic study of religious practice in a New York City AIDS organization. Recent collaborative projects and publications include a study of New York City's Muslim taxi drivers' religious practices (with Elta Smith) published in 2004, a forthcoming (2005) paper on the impact of Asian religious actors on First Amendment jurisprudence (with Jennifer Snow), and continuing research on Buddhist and Catholic nuns in interfaith dialogue (with Wendy Cadge). Bender is currently working on a book based on field research with contemporary mystics and spiritual practitioners in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Provisionally titled *Worlds of Experience*, this volume will investigate the lived practices of religious experience in alternative and mainstream religious groups, and tease out the links between early twentieth century expressions of experience and its contemporary manifestations, including changing discourses around experiences' technologies, validity, and social impact. Bender teaches courses in sociology of religion, theory and method in religious studies, and religions in contemporary America, and enjoys utilizing and teaching ethnographic field methods to expose her students to urban religious communities. She lives in New York City with her husband Jonathan and their children Solomon and Hope.



Lila Corwin Berman received her Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Yale University in December 2004 and earned her B.A. from Amherst College. She is currently the Mal and Lea Bank Early Career Professor of Jewish Studies and assistant professor of Religious Studies at Penn State where she teaches courses on American religious history and modern Jewish history. Her research focuses on the construction of Jewishness—as a political, religious, ethnic and class marker—in twentieth-century America. Her current book project, titled *A Jewish Marilyn Monroe and Tales of Other Jews Who Transformed America and Themselves*, examines Jewish acts of self-presentation from the 1920s through the 1960s. In a series of case studies—including Jewish missionary attempts, the rise of Jewish social science, and Jewish attitudes toward intermarriage—Berman argues that Jews transformed themselves and American national identity by working to explain Jewishness. In the future, Berman is interested in researching the meaning of class, and particularly the middle class, to twentieth-century Jewish identity. She has published an article about Jewish missionaries in the journal *Religion and American Culture*. She was the recipient of a Wexner Graduate Fellowship and has also received support from the Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion at Yale, the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, and the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History. Over the next two years, she plans on teaching a new course about memory and history in American-Jewish autobiographies, as well as courses on American religious history, American Jewish history and the public face of religion in the United States.



Joe Creech teaches courses in American history, American religious history, social theory, and the interdisciplinary humanities program in the Christ College Honors College at Valparaiso University. He has also taught American history in the history departments at Valparaiso University and the University of Notre Dame. Creech earned his B.A. in Religious Studies with honors from UNC-Chapel Hill (1986), a Masters in Theological Studies at Duke University Divinity School (1992), and then a Masters (1994) and Ph.D. (2000) in American history at the University of Notre Dame. Creech's research involves the connections among religion, economics, culture, and politics in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. His work on pentecostalism has appeared in *Church History*, and his first book, *Righteous Indignation: Religion and the Populist Revolution in North Carolina* (University of Illinois Press, forthcoming, 2006), explores evangelicalism, race, and political action in the late-nineteenth-century South. Creech's work has been supported by a number of grants, including a dissertation fellowship from the Pew Program in Religion and American History at Yale University and an Archie K. Davis Fellowship from the North Caroliniana Society at UNC-Chapel Hill. His next project is a comprehensive study of race, religion, and political economy in the post-Civil War South.



Kathleen Sprows Cummings is the Associate Director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame. A native of Philadelphia, Cummings received a baccalaureate degree in history and philosophy from the University of Scranton in 1993. She received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Notre Dame in 1999, and spent two years as a Lilly Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities and Arts at Valparaiso University. At Notre Dame, Cummings teaches several courses on the history of American Catholicism and the history of women and religion in the United States. She has been a faculty fellow in the Notre Dame Vocation Initiative and frequently speaks on campus on issues related to Catholicism and feminism. Her publications have appeared in the *U.S. Catholic Historian*, *American Catholic Studies*, *Commonweal*, and *America*. At present she is at work on a manuscript, *New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholic Identity in the Progressive Era*, which will be published by the University of North Carolina Press. The book explores the relationship between evolving definitions of American womanhood and the articulation of Catholic identity in the United States through an analysis of Catholic women's participation in education, politics and reform between 1880 and 1920. Cummings lives in South Bend, Indiana, with her husband and two children.



Henry Goldschmidt is currently Assistant Professor of Religion and Society in the Religion Department at Wesleyan University, in Middletown CT. He received his B.A. in anthropology from Wesleyan University in 1991, and his Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 2000. Before coming (back) to Wesleyan, he taught cultural anthropology, Jewish studies and diaspora studies at Rutgers University, Dickinson College and elsewhere. He will soon complete a book on Jewish identities and Black-Jewish differences in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Crown Heights—a neighborhood known for its history of intermittent conflict between Lubavitch Hasidic Jews and their predominantly Afro-Caribbean neighbors, most notably in the deadly violence of August 1991. The manuscript is provisionally titled *Race, Religion and Other Differences Among the Chosen Peoples of Crown Heights*. It will be published in 2006 by Rutgers University Press. He is also the co-editor (with Elizabeth McAlister) of the collection *Race, Nation and Religion in the Americas* (Oxford University Press, 2004), and his work on Crown Heights has been published in the journal *Diaspora* and a number of edited collections. He was born and raised in Brooklyn, where he lives (when he's not up at Wesleyan) with his wife, Jillian Shagan.



Charles A. Israel is Visiting Assistant Professor of History at Sewanee: The University of the South. He teaches courses in the history of American religions, the United States South, colonial North America, comparative slavery and emancipation, and the anti-evolution controversy. Israel completed his Ph.D. in history at Rice University in 2001. After two years in the history department at Texas A&M University, he is pleased to be back at Sewanee, his undergraduate alma mater. His first book, *Before Scopes: Evangelicals, Education, and Evolution in Tennessee, 1870–1925*, was recently published by the University of Georgia Press (2004). An exploration of the relationship of white Protestants to the changing nature of “public” education, *Before Scopes* focuses on debates about control of schooling as a contest to define the nature of the New South state and the role of religion in public life. While also interested in the roots, strategies, and implications of modern anti-evolution movements in the United States, Israel is beginning research on a second book, “The Southern Social Gospel: Religion, Reform, and the Riddle of Race.” It will explore the organizational and intellectual history of southern social Christianity, arguing for the necessity of simultaneously examining white and black Christian responses to the social and urban crises of the early Twentieth Century.



Sylvester A. Johnson is Assistant Professor of Religion at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida. Johnson earned his Ph.D. in 2002 at Union Theological Seminary in New York City with a concentration in contemporary religious thought. As a full-time professor in a small undergraduate area of religious studies, Johnson teaches a range of courses, including African American religion, religion and gender, scripture classes, religion in American culture, religion and race theory, and world religions. He recently published *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God* (Palgrave Macmillan 2004). In this book, Johnson examines how black and white American Christians made recourse to the Genesis legend of Noah, whose son Ham was commonly identified as the ancestor of the black race. Ham and Ham's descendants were inscribed as evil villains. When African American Christians employed this character to locate themselves in the world of biblical narrative, they simultaneously assented to a vilifying semiotics of anti-blackness. The study reflects Johnson's central interest in the history of biblically derived ideas about divine peoplehood (identity) and religious alterity. Johnson has also published an article on Euro-American uses of biblical narratives to justify Native American genocide and has written a forthcoming article on novelist Richard Wright's literary depictions of religion and tribalism. Johnson is currently researching nineteenth-century racial histories by African American authors in order to produce an edited anthology of these works. He is also preparing an article on the idea of being "true Israel" in early Christianity.



John Lardas received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 2003. He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Haverford College where he teaches courses in American Religious History, American literature, and critical theory. His first book, *The Bop Apocalypse: The Religious Visions of Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs* (University of Illinois, 2001) was an assessment of the cultural criticism put forth by a particular literary movement within the volatile religious climate of post-World War II America. He has also written or co-written essays on Walter Benjamin, live nativity scenes in the Midwest, the ethical agenda of advertising schools, the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles, and the works of Charles Olson and Don DeLillo. Lardas is currently revising two related projects that stem from his dissertation, *Specters of Moby-Dick: A Particular History of Cultural Metaphysics in America*. The first uses Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851) as a window upon the emergence of the culture concept and its relationship to metaphysical religiosity, reform movements, technology, and a burgeoning American empire. The second project historicizes Melville's critical approach to "secularism" as it has been appropriated by twentieth-century figures seeking to address the religious dimensions of the market economy, mass media, and visual technologies. Lardas received his BA in Religion from Princeton University and his MA in Comparative Religion from Miami University (OH). His wife, Libby Kleine, is an artist and co-founder of half-full (www.half-full.org), a non-profit group that provides graphic design for environmental and social organizations.

continued, page 8



Tracy Neal Leavelle is Assistant Professor of History and Native American Studies at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He joined the faculty at Creighton in 2003 after two years at Smith College as the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities. There, he taught in the American Studies Program and participated in the Kahn Liberal Arts Institute project on “Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Ancient and Modern Worlds.” He earned a Ph.D. in history from Arizona State University (2001) and an A.B. in anthropology and Native American Studies from Dartmouth College (1992). At Creighton, he offers a course on “American Religions: In Search of the Promised Land,” as well as courses in early American and American Indian history, frontiers and borderlands, and Western civilization. His book manuscript, “Encounters of Spirit: Religion, Culture, and Community in French and Indian North America,” examines the nature of spiritual encounters between Catholic missionaries and American Indians in colonial North America, exploring such issues as the translation and reception of religious concepts, the impact of gender and generational differences on Native responses to Christianity, and the role of religion in shaping colonial geographies. He has published in *American Quarterly*, *American Indian Quarterly*, and has an interactive mission atlas forthcoming as part of the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative. Looking ahead, he is developing two projects that build on his interests in religious encounters and issues of space and place. The first is a collaborative study with an astronomer of attempts to reconcile science and the sacred in contemporary cultural conflicts over sites and objects with both religious and scientific significance. The second project, “Native Lands: Home and History in Indian America,” explores the ways Native peoples have used narrative and ritual to create, maintain, and renew connections to place through time.



Kristy Nabhan-Warren received her Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Indiana University in 2001. She is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Religion at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. She teaches courses on American religions, Catholic experiences in the United States, race, religion, and culture, and contemporary Christian traditions. She also teaches a course on “self and other” in American religious history in the College’s Honors program. Her research focuses on the interplay of gender, ethnicity, and religion, specifically within contemporary U.S. Latino communities, and her book, *The Virgin of El Barrio: Marian Apparitions, Catholic Evangelizing, and Mexican American Activism* (NYU Press, May 2005) is an ethnographic study of Mary’s Ministries, an evangelical Catholic community in south Phoenix. Nabhan-Warren is trained as a social historian and as an ethnographer of American religions and her passion is in doing ethnography. Her next project, tentatively entitled “Working for Christ: *Cursillistas* and the New American Catholicism” is an ethnohistorical study of the Catholic “*Cursillo*” (“short course in Christianity”) movement in the Southwestern United States. Over the next few years, Nabhan-Warren will conduct interviews with *cursillistas*, men and women who have taken the courses, and will contextualize Mexican American men’s and women’s oral histories with the history of the movement in the southwest and in the United States more broadly. This new project builds upon her interest in the relationship between what scholars of American Catholicism have long called “popular” and “official” piety and how U.S. Latinos/as are challenging this long-held scholarly dichotomy of religious experience. Nabhan-Warren’s research has been supported by the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at Notre Dame and by Augustana College. She lives in Rock Island with her husband, Steve Warren, and their son Cormac.



Evelyn Savidge Sterne is assistant professor of history at the University of Rhode Island, where she teaches courses in American religion, American immigration, and the twentieth-century U.S. She received her B.A. from Yale in 1989 and her Ph.D. from Duke in 1999. Her research explores intersections between religion, ethnicity, class and politics in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century U.S. Her book, *Ballots and Bibles: Ethnic Politics and the Catholic Church in Providence* (Cornell University Press, 2003), explores ways in which immigrants used parishes as political organizing spaces at a time when many lacked access to activist vehicles such as unions and the vote. A related article, “Bringing Religion into Working-Class History: Parish, Public and Politics in Providence, 1890-1930,” appeared in *Social Science History* (2000). She also is the author of “Beyond the Boss: Immigration and American Political Culture, 1880-1940,” which appeared in *E Pluribus Unum? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, ed. Gary Gerstle and John Mollenkopf (Russell Sage Foundation, 2001). Her work has received support from the Pew Program in Religion and American History at Yale, the Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion at Yale, the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Civilization at Brown, the American Historical Association, and the University of Rhode Island Council for Research. She currently is working on a study of religion and the working class during the Great Depression. Raised in Manhattan, she now lives in Newport, Rhode Island, with her husband, James Garman, and their son, Michael.



Christopher White is an assistant professor of American Religious History at Georgia State University in Atlanta. He was trained in religious studies at Harvard University, where he received a Ph.D. in 2002 and also lectured and directed the undergraduate religion program. He teaches courses on religion and psychology in modern America, religion and social reform, religion and popular culture in America, and methods and theories in the study of religion. His research interests include American Christian spirituality, the history of religious experience, the history of sciences of mind and brain, and other subjects in American intellectual and cultural history. He has published articles on new religious movements and religion and culture in New England and is currently revising his dissertation into a book manuscript entitled *Minds Intensely Unsettled: Psychology and the American Pursuit of Spiritual Assurance, 1840-1920*. His book examines how the rise and popularization of nineteenth-century psychology influenced American discourses on mind, body, and the “spiritual self.”

**The
Role
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**Jean
Bethke
Elshtain**
Guest Speaker

**Friday, October 14, 2005
7:30 p.m.
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