

## Young Scholars 2007-2009 Meet in Indianapolis

The first group of participants in the renewed Young Scholars in American Religion Program met in Indianapolis October 18-21, 2007. Funded by Lilly Endowment, the new program will run from 2007 through 2012 and include three groups of Young Scholars.

The 2007-2009 class joined with their mentors, Dr. Amanda Porterfield, Spivey Professor of Religious Studies at Florida State University and co-editor of the journal *Church History*, and Paul Harvey, Professor of History at University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Porterfield is author most recently of *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford University Press). Harvey's highly acclaimed *Freedom's Coming* was just released in paperback by University of North Carolina Press.

The purpose of this first meeting was both to get acquainted and to discuss the teaching of American religious studies. This group of participants was trained in history, religious studies, and American studies, so discussion topics varied. Each will build upon the sessions by creating a new course syllabus and rationale for the meeting in fall 2009. Meantime, they will begin working on a research topic for discussion in spring 2008 and fall 2009. "Without doubt," said participant Edward Blum of San Diego State University, "our first Young Scholars weekend in Indianapolis was the highlight of my academic career. We debated and joked for hours about how to teach U.S. religious history, what books worked best with students, and what cinematic documentaries we show and refuse to show. Paul Harvey and Amanda Porterfield are ideal mentors. Whether over meals, at the conference table, or on the football field, we labored to more effectively teach American religion in our various classrooms."

The Young Scholars in American Religion Program has graduated nearly one hundred scholars since its inception in 1991. Last year over 100,000 searches were made into the database of syllabi located at the Center's website.

"Clearly this program has become a touchstone for how we teach about religion in its North American contexts," said Philip Goff, director of the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture. "A large portion of the web searches into the syllabi database came from foreign addresses. What we say and do in this program has ramifications in classrooms across the country and around the world."



*Young Scholars in American Religion 2007-2009. Back row (L to R): Charles Irons, Randall Stephens, Spencer Fluhman, Edward Blum, Matthew Sutton, Darren Dochuk, and seminar leader Paul Harvey. Front row: Kate Engel, Kathryn Lofton, Tisa Wenger, seminar leader Amanda Porterfield, and Rebecca Goetz.*

The mentors for the program came away impressed and renewed in their own work. "The competition for this class of young scholars was intense, and it is a privilege to join such an impressive and talented group," said Amanda Porterfield. "Paul and I are both delighted by the congeniality of the group, the diverse viewpoints and backgrounds represented, and the prospect of building on the debate and discussion we started here. We all recognize the payoffs these conversations will have in our own work, and how these conversations will enable us to participate more

fully in the vitality and direction of our field."

Paul Harvey concurred. "This new group of Young Scholars, featuring a well-published and diverse cast of scholars, engaged in a spirited weekend of discussion on teaching in the field. I am away refreshed and energized about our field and its future."

Descriptions of the new participants in the Young Scholars in American Religion Program are found in this Newsletter on pages three to six.

The Center will begin a search for the next group of Young Scholars in fall 2008.

## Young Scholars 2002-2006 Reunite in San Diego

Participants and mentors from the Young Scholars in American Religion Program from 2002 through 2006 met for a daylong conference in San Diego on November 16<sup>th</sup>. The event was sponsored by a grant from Lilly Endowment. Harry S. Stout and Thomas Tweed spoke about the state of the field and the role of the program in helping to shape American religious studies. Lively conversations ensued as everyone in the room participated in discussing the topics at hand.

Harry Stout, Jonathan Edwards Professor of Religious Studies and American Studies at Yale University, was previously involved in the YSAR program as a mentor to the 1994-1996 class. Offering a sweeping historical survey of changes in the field since 1974, when he first polled researchers in American religious history, to 1993, when a second survey was taken, to the situation today, Stout underscored a number of changes that have occurred. Moving away from divinity schools to programs in religious studies, away from intellectual history to social and then cultural history and ethnography, and away from New England to the nation at large and then beyond our borders, American religious history has matured and significantly extended its influence among other types of historians.

Despite these impressive leaps forward for the field, several problems have developed. For instance, there are fewer institutions that fund studies of religion in America just at the time when we were making great progress in understanding it and in helping other disciplines realize its significance. Also, a number of important topics—especially subjects in early America—have been left behind as we seek to press our understanding in new areas. These topics need renewed attention, for they continue to reveal things about American life today.

Leaving his audience with the question about where the field is moving, as well as where it should be moving, Stout generated an enthusiastic discussion. Opinions varied but several sentiments dominated, including the significance of non-practitioners studying non-Christian traditions and evangelicals in order to better understand the present, the growing importance of studying religion and violence, and re-thinking such mainstays as colonialism in light of what we now know today about race and gender.

Thomas Tweed, Zachary Smith Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, was previously a participant of the YSAR program from 1991 to 1993. Tweed focused on the dilemmas faced by those

who study religion in North America and proposed several responses for consideration.

The field faces several challenges, according to Tweed. The first is *contraction*, a continued narrowness on the political boundaries of the United States and too much attention—at least of late—to the twentieth century. Related to that is *overspecialization*, the tendency to do only one sort of analysis on particular topics. *Fragmentation* results, as academics divide themselves through their approaches or professional loyalties. Finally, *parochialization* continues in our perpetual focus on American exceptionalism.

Tweed proposed five responses to these problems. The first is to expand our spatial and geographical conception of the field, that is, to understand how religion moves into and interacts with various surroundings. This will require us to encourage theoretical diversity and sophistication, that is, to understand that we work in a field as opposed to a discipline,

and therefore need to develop the means to analyze religion from various angles. Third, we must internationalize the field by putting America in its pan-Atlantic or pan-Pacific or global context, depending on the topic under study. Next, we should increase collaboration with other disciplines, many of which seek greater understanding of religion at the very time we are trying to put religion in its larger context. Finally, we should institutionalize these new collaborations through new scholarly associations. Tweed proposed a scholarly society

constituted by those from around the world studying religion in North America from their vantage point holding biennial meetings, with half being held outside the United States.

Again, discussion followed. Topics ranging from whether professional societies serve us well or further balkanize the field to the relationship of ethnography to history energized the thirty-five who gathered in San Diego. Great agreement was expressed about the general health of the field and hopes for further interdisciplinary collaboration. Concern was expressed about how academic institutions tout the value of interdisciplinary work but rarely reward it. Nonetheless

all were agreed that only through broader conceptions of our jobs—including teaching beyond our classrooms in traditionally non-academic settings—can we convince people, including our colleagues, of the depth and breadth of studying religion in American life.



*Harry S. Stout addresses the Young Scholars in American Religion 2002-2006 in San Diego on November 16*



*Twenty-seven of 36 Young Scholars participants attended the reunion, as well as all six of their seminar leaders.*



*The reunion was an opportunity for discussion, but also an opportunity to visit and catch up.*

# introducing the

# young scholars in american religion 2007-2009

**edward j. blum** is a historian of race and religion in the United States. He is the author of *W. E. B. Du Bois, American Prophet* (2007), *Reforging the White Republic* (2005), and co-editor of *Vale of Tears: New Essays on Religion and Reconstruction* (2005). Blum is the winner of the Peter Seaborg



Award in Civil War Studies, the C. Vann Woodward Dissertation Prize, and the Gustavus Myers Book Prize (honorable mention). His most recent religious biography of W. E. B. Du Bois was recently nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in biography. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky in 2003 and has been a fellow with the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute at Harvard University and with the National Endowment for the Humanities. In the classroom, Blum is interested in helping students engage the past in a variety of ways, whether through music and images or role-playing and historical simulations. His courses include Jacksonian America, the Civil War and Reconstruction, religion in the United States, and African American history. Currently, Blum is co-editing (with Paul Harvey) the *Columbia Guide to American Religious History* and writing a monograph on race and depictions of Jesus Christ in American culture, society, and politics, titled *Jesus in Red, White, and Black*.

**darren dochuk** received an M.A. in Canadian history from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, before completing a Ph.D. in U.S. history from the University of Notre Dame in 2005. He is



now Assistant Professor of History at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. At Notre Dame he completed a dissertation that attributed the rise of the Sunbelt Republican Right to the proliferation and politicization of southern evangelicalism in post-World War II Southern California. Winner of the 2006 Allan Nevins Dissertation Prize, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion and Grassroots Politics in California's Southland* will be published by W.W. Norton. Dochuk has also contributed essays on related themes to a number of publications, including *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, *History Compass*, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, and the second edition of Mark Noll's edited volume *Religion and Politics in America*. While completing revisions on *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, Dochuk continues to research his next book project, which examines the politics of faith, energy, and environment in twentieth-century North America.

At Purdue Dochuk offers courses that allow him to combine his research and teaching interests. He regularly teaches undergraduate courses on American Political History, Post-1945 America, and the Post-Civil War United States, but also offers senior-level and graduate classes on the History of the American Right, Politics and Culture in the Modern West, the Rise of the Sunbelt, and The Seventies. Through his involvement in the Young Scholars in American Religion program, Dochuk will design a course on Religion and Politics in Modern America, which he intends to offer Purdue undergraduates in the near future.

**kate carte engel** is an assistant professor of history at Texas A&M University. She received her Bachelors degree from Haverford College, and her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 2003, and specializes in the religious history of the eighteenth century Atlantic World, particularly the rise of transatlantic evangelicalism. Her first book, *Pilgrims and Profits: Moravians in the Mid-Atlantic Marketplace*, examined the influence of religion on economic choices in the early modern world through the transatlantic Moravian community and its North American base in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She argued that the role of religion in economy should be understood as a historically contingent process, rather than a timeless confrontation. The book is forthcoming from the University of Pennsylvania Press. She is currently investigating the evolution of Protestant and national identity in North America during the era of the Revolutionary War, when the international “Protestant Interest” was challenged by war within the Protestant world and alliance with Catholic France. She has previously been a Barra Postdoctoral Fellow at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies (2004-2005), a dissertation fellow at Yale University’s Center for Religion and American Life (2002-2003), and a dissertation fellow at the Program for Early American Economy and Society at the Library Company of Philadelphia (2000-2001), and she has articles in *Early American Studies* and the forthcoming edited collection *Pietism in German and North America: 1680 – 1820*. At Texas A&M, Engel teaches a two-semester sequence in American religious history, as well as undergraduate and graduate seminars in the subject. Her teaching interests also include religion and politics in modern America, and the role of missionaries and missionary work in American history.



**spencer fluhman** was born and raised in Utah. He earned a B.A., summa cum laude, in Near Eastern Studies from Brigham Young University (1998) and an M.A. and Ph.D. in History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2000, 2006). At Wisconsin, he studied early American religious history and wrote a history of antebellum anti-Mormon writing, which he is currently expanding to treat the period 1830-1896. In that larger study, he situates anti-Mormon writing within the context of American thinking about non-Christian faiths, church/state relationships, and the category “religion” itself. His research has appeared in the *Journal of Religion and Society* and *BYU Studies*. Additionally, he has presented papers at the meetings of the American Society of Church History, American Academy of Religion, and Mormon History Association. In 1999 and 2003, respectively, he held a research fellowship at the Smith Institute for LDS History and worked as a research associate on the *Papers of Joseph Smith* project. He is currently assistant professor of Church History & Doctrine at BYU, where he teaches American religious history and Mormon history. Both his teaching and research seek to understand religious identity-making, perceptions of religious difference, and the complicated relationship between faith and the life of the mind. He and his wife, Hollie, live with their three children in Cedar Hills, Utah.



**rebecca goetz** received her Ph.D. in Early American History from Harvard University in 2006. She is currently at work on a manuscript entitled “From Potential Christians to Hereditary Heathens: Religion and Race in Early America, 1550-1750.” Her research interests lie in the intersection of European and African religious cultures in early North America, and in the ways in which the early modern concept of racial difference emerged from those intersections. Her teaching interests include the histories of North America, the Atlantic World, and the American Revolution. She lives in Houston, Texas, where she enjoys BBQ, Texas microbrews, and life at home with a crazy cat named Pepper.



**charles f. irons** is an assistant professor of history at Elon University in Elon, North Carolina. Both a product and student of the American South—Irons is a Chapel Hill native and received his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia—he studies the spiritual and political consequences of interactions between black and white Southerners within antebellum evangelical churches. Irons has published several articles on the intersection of religion and politics in Virginia, and



his forthcoming book, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (UNC Press, 2008), addresses the relationship between evangelicalism and the most contentious political issue in American history. The central thesis is that white evangelicals forged their ideas about slavery in response to the spiritual initiatives of black evangelicals. His current research is on the small cohort of black Southerners, both before and after emancipation, who maintained close spiritual ties with white evangelicals. He is particularly interested in the tens of thousands of black evangelicals who retained their affiliation with biracial churches for months—or even years—following the Civil War.

At Elon, Irons teaches courses on slavery, the Civil War, American religious history, and the nineteenth-century South. He is an active sponsor of undergraduate research and has received University-wide recognition for his innovative and effective teaching. With grant support from the Center for Teaching and Learning, he is currently working with Elon students to create a digital archive about Alamance County in the Civil War era. The first fruits of this project have

included student research on Confederate recruitment, white supremacist violence during Reconstruction, and the choices of free blacks during wartime. Time at home with his wife, Dana and daughter, Caroline, provides a beautiful respite from these accounts of thwarted racial justice.

**kathryn lofton** is an assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies and the Program in American Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. After receiving her A.B. in religion and history at the University of Chicago in 2000, she attended the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she received her M.A. (2002) and Ph.D. (2005). Before moving to Bloomington, she taught courses on American religion, comparative fundamentalisms, and Greek and Roman literatures at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Now freed from Homeric



epithets, she offers coursework on religion and popular cultures, Indiana as an American icon, and the history of religions in the U.S. A specialist in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American religious history, she has published articles on the evangelical preacher, theological modernism, civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer, and the ritual practices of Oprah Winfrey's multimedia empire. Her essay, "Queering Fundamentalism," won the 2006-2007 LGBT Religious History Award from the LGBT Religious Archives Network, and will be published in the *Journal of the History of Sexuality* in 2008. She is currently working on her first monograph, *The Modernity in Mr. Shaw: Modernisms and Fundamentalisms in American Culture*, which offers a microhistory of American religious cultures through the life of one Presbyterian fundamentalist, John Balcom Shaw (1860-1935), an editor of *The Fundamentals* who was remitted from the ministry following accusations of sodomy in 1918. She is also co-editor, with Laurie Maffly-Kipp, of *Women's Work: An Anthology of African-American Women's Historical Writings, 1832-1920*.

**randall j. stephens** is an Assistant Professor of History at Eastern Nazarene College (ENC), Quincy, MA. He has taught there since 2004, shortly after completing his graduate work under Bertram Wyatt-Brown at the University of Florida. Stephens teaches the full range of US history survey courses, and a variety of special topics classes, including: the American Liberal Imagination, the History of the Civil Rights Movement, America in the Vietnam War Era, Religion and



American Culture, the History and Culture of the U.S. South since 1865, and Recent American Historiography. His book, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South*, was published by Harvard University Press in November 2007. He is currently co-authoring a second book for Harvard on conservative American evangelicalism with ENC professor of physics Karl Giberson. Stephens has composed chapters and articles dealing with religious and cultural history topics to be published by the University of Kentucky Press, Columbia University Press, the University of South Carolina Press, Cambridge University Press, the University of Florida Press, and the University of Alabama Press. He created and manages the ENC history department website and has built a number of other history and religious studies related websites. Stephens is an editor of the *Journal of Southern Religion* and an associate editor of the review of the Historical Society, *Historically Speaking*. He received the ENC Professional Achievement Award in 2007. He lives with his wife Beth and their dog Beatrice in Quincy, MA.

**matthew avery sutton** is an assistant professor of history at Oakland University, part of Michigan's state university system, where he teaches American religious and cultural history, and the American West. He received his Ph.D. in history from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 2005. His research focuses on the intersection of religion, politics, and popular culture in the United States. His first book, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Harvard University Press, April 2007), won the Thomas J. Wilson Memorial Prize from Harvard University Press, awarded annually to the best book in any discipline by a first time author. It is also receiving widespread media attention. The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) produced a documentary for its critically acclaimed *American Experience* series based on the manuscript and he has recorded almost a dozen radio interviews, including National Public Radio's highest rated show, *Morning Edition*. Print reviews of the book have appeared in the *New York Review of Books*, *New Yorker*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Los Angeles Times*, among many others. His next book, which will also be published by Harvard University Press, is tentatively entitled *American Evangelicals and the Politics of Apocalypse*. It examines the relationship among American evangelicalism, apocalyptic thought, and political activism, arguing that the three have been inexorably entwined across the twentieth century. Sutton has also published articles in *Church History*, the *Journal of Policy History*, the *Public Historian*, *American Sexuality*, and on the History News Network. He has received research fellowships from the Woodrow Wilson Center and the Louisville Institute. Matt is married to Kristen Coke-Sutton. They have a two-year-old son named Jackson.



**tisa wenger** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Arizona State University. She received her B.A. in English from Eastern Mennonite University, an M.A. in Women's Studies in Religion from Claremont Graduate University, and her Ph.D. in Religion from Princeton University in 2002. Before she came to ASU, Dr. Wenger held a Bill and Rita Clements Fellowship at Southern Methodist University's Clements Center for Southwest Studies, and served as Acting Associate Director at Princeton University's Center for the Study of Religion. Dr. Wenger teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in American religious history, religion in the U.S. west, racial and religious encounters in U.S. history, and approaches to the study of religion in America. Her research examines the historical intersections of race and religion as categories of difference; and the cultural, social, and political implications of popular and scholarly conceptions of religion. Her publications include essays in *History of Religions*, *Journal of the Southwest*, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, and several edited volumes. Her forthcoming book, *Defining Religion: The Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and the Native American Struggle for Religious Freedom* (University of North Carolina Press), analyzes the development and consequences of cultural notions of "religion" and "religious freedom" in U.S. Indian policy and for Native American self-determination. She is now starting work on her second book, which will address the role of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Protestant home missionaries in shaping American notions of race, religion, and nation. She lives in Tempe, Arizona with her husband, Rod Groff, and their children Jordan and Sophia.



## Mark your Calendar

Center-sponsored or co-sponsored events coming in Spring 2008

"Successful Multiracial Churches: How It's Done." Dr. George Yancey, featured speaker. 5:30 p.m., February 28, 2008. IUPUI, University Place Ballroom. Tickets: \$20. Contact: [ecurtis4@iupui.edu](mailto:ecurtis4@iupui.edu)

"Religious Pluralism in the Study of American Religion." April 3, 2008, IUPUI, time and place TBA. Featured speaker: Amanda Porterfield. Contact: [raac@iupui.edu](mailto:raac@iupui.edu)

"Varieties of Naturalism: The Nature of Faith and Naturalist Responses to Atheism." April 10-11, 2008, IUPUI. Thursday, April 10, 12:00-1:30, CA438: featured speakers Matt Flamm and Beth Eddy. 7:00-9:00 p.m., Lilly Auditorium: Panel Discussion on naturalism and atheism. Friday, April 11, time and place TBA, featured speaker: John Shook. Contact: [martcole@iupui.edu](mailto:martcole@iupui.edu)

"Mormons and American Life." May 2-3, 2008, IUPUI, time and place TBA. Featured speakers: Jan Shipps, William Deverell, Kathleen Flake, J. Spencer Fluhman, Sarah Gordon, and Kathryn Daynes. Contact: [raac@iupui.edu](mailto:raac@iupui.edu)

## What They're Reading . . .

When *Jasmine and Stars* appeared this year from UNC Press, I cried out, "Finally! Thank God."

Part memoir, part literary critique, part poetry, *Jasmine and Stars* entices and assaults the senses with its complex portrait of Muslim women's lives in Iran. Iranian American Fatemeh Keshavarz, a professor of Persian and chair of the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures at Washington University in St. Louis, begins her book with a reminiscence of literary culture in 1960s Shiraz. We meet her father, a lover of Persian verse, and her uncle, the painter.

Iranian Muslim men are not cast as villains in this book, which is a welcome relief from the stereotypes found in a literary genre that Keshavarz dubs the "New Orientalist" narrative. Throughout the book, Keshavarz juxtaposes her life history and a discussion of Iran's lively literary scene with a piercing critique of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, an English language best-seller that blames the 1979 Islamic revolution for killing Iranian literary culture and oppressing women. Offering a more complex view of contemporary Iran, Keshavarz explores the works of female poet Forough Farrokhzad and novelist Sharnush Parsipur. Women's literature is alive and well, Keshavarz proclaims, and it critiques sexism and other social problems while also affirming the humanity of men.

Today, geopolitical conflicts between Iran and the United States too often color American understandings of Iranian culture. Affirming the basic, three-dimensional humanity of Iranian people is an act of love and justice for Keshavarz. So, it is fitting that the final chapter of the book, entitled "Tea with my Father and the Saints," ends with a poem dedicated to an uncle who always made her laugh.

**Edward E. Curtis IV** is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at IUPUI and is author, most recently, of *The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States*.

Over the last year or so I've been coming back frequently to Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety: The Islamist Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton UP, 2005), so I take this as an invitation to think about why I've been so avid in recommending a book about Muslim women in Egypt to my Americanist colleagues and students. Mahmood offers a richly textured ethnography of a women's mosque movement in Cairo, part of a larger religious revival that has drawn women of different classes to traditional Islamic practices of piety. As appreciative readers from Lila Abu-Lughod to Judith Butler to Charles Taylor have noted, Mahmood upends liberal assumptions about gender and agency by which feminist scholarship on devout Muslim women too long took the form of self-congratulatory diagnoses of internalized oppression and checklists of the dangers of Islam. To my view, as long as the presumed plight of Muslim women continues tacitly to underwrite the enormous violence perpetrated by the U.S. in the name of the War on Terror—as long as "you'll look great in a burqa" remains the conservative pundits' most damning riposte to any non-Muslim American woman who would raise her voice against torture, rendition, or warrantless wiretapping, for example—Mahmood's book remains required reading. And as much as I would wish for my students and colleagues who write sympathetically of conservative Christian women in America to aspire to Mahmood's theoretical sophistication and narrative subtlety, I particularly appreciate the cautions her book throws in the way of any easy translation of her insights into a first-world, Christian setting. A telling asymmetry Mahmood alerts us to comes in the way that scholars of Islam who write for American and European audiences are routinely expected to locate their work within a geopolitical frame, while those who write of contemporary Christian groups and practices for the same audience are not. In my classroom, at least, Mahmood's book urges students of religion in America toward

this greater geopolitical awareness, and specifically toward a fuller reckoning with the ways that the presumed insufficiencies of *other* women's lives (and those of Muslim women in particular) have long informed assumptions about Christian women's flourishing in both religious and secular contexts.

In this connection, I think of the brilliantly arresting image that Roxanne Euben puts on the cover of her *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism* (Princeton, 1999): an illustration from a nineteenth-century illusionist's manual, "Raising a Ghost by a Magic Lantern," in which a trick of light throws up the shadow of a ghostly, shrouded figure that evokes what Euben notes is today "the most common visual image of Islamic fundamentalism in Western scholarship and media, the Muslim woman covered head to foot" in the burqa or chador (*Enemy in the Mirror*, xiv). Like the shrouded illusionist, for Euben, the discourses of (what she calls) Western rationalism project the frightening specter of "Islam," typically in the shorthand of the veiled Muslim woman, all the while concealing the "mechanisms of production" that give rise to such images and "the fears they express and repress" (*Enemy*, xiv). For those of us who teach and write about American religion, Mahmood's *Politics of Piety* helps us to see that the "mechanisms of production" by which the Muslim woman comes into view as the Christian woman's spectral other or double belong crucially to the stories American religious historians tell, even if flesh-and-blood Muslim women rarely appear in those stories.

**Tracy Fessenden** is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Arizona State University and author of *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature*.

I am currently reading *Diverse Communities: The Problem with Social Capital*, by Barbara Arneil, and *The Conscience of a Liberal*, by Paul Krugman.

The Arneil book is fascinating, because she "deconstructs" social capital theory as developed by Coleman and Putnam, and makes explicit the political theory assumptions that are the unexamined underpinnings of Putnam's work, especially. She ties Putnam to a communitarian philosophy that privileges civic unity over rights-based theories of justice, and suggests that his is a particularly Christian narrative of "paradise, the fall, and redemption," where redemption requires greater civic engagement. (Putnam is Jewish, of course, but—as Winnie Sullivan once explained to me—in America, even the Catholics and Jews are Protestant.)

Arneil also points to an aspect of the data that I have not seen discussed in the other social capital literature. Not only has the overall level of generalized social trust declined, as has been widely reported, but there is a persistent, significant and measurable difference between levels of social trust in different groups. Women are slightly less trusting than men, blacks are substantially less trusting than whites, etc. It would seem that trust—or the lack of it—may be a reasonable response to unsatisfactory experience. We trust less when the institutions of society are demonstrably less trustworthy. If social distrust is a rational response to unsatisfactory reality, Paul Krugman's book could be viewed as a handy list of many of the things that are untrustworthy in our current political and business sectors. I'm not as far into *Conscience of a Liberal* as I am into *Diverse Communities*, but it has been interesting to see how much reinforcement there is between the essays of an economist/columnist and the formal scholarship of a Canadian feminist academic.

Shades of Jimmy Carter's "malaise."

**Sheila Suess Kennedy** is Associate Professor of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at IUPUI and is author of the recent *God and Country: America in Red and Blue*.

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# religion and american culture

## Upcoming Issue:

Forum: "Religion and Politics on the American Scene," with contributions by Daniel Walker Howe, Sheila Suess Kennedy, Kevin Phillips, and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan

"The Religious and Racial Meanings of *The Green Pastures*," by Curtis J. Evans

"Why Southern Gospel Music Matters," by Douglass Harrison

"The Greening of Catholicism: Identity, Conversion and Continuity," by Keith Douglass Warner OFM

"Framing Catholicism: Jack Chick's Anti-Catholic Cartoons and the Flexible Boundaries of the Culture Wars," by Adam Murphree and Michael Ian Borer

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