

Catholic Studies Newsletter

Department of Religious Studies

Spring 2015

Keeping you up to date on our graduate students, the Tipton Visiting Professor, and the Catholic Studies lectures, conferences, and events here at UCSB.



Greetings from the Chair

Ann Taves, Cordano Professor of Catholic Studies

Dear Friends of Catholic Studies at UCSB,

We are pleased to bring you the fifth issue of our Catholic Studies Newsletter to update you on Catholic Studies related developments here at UCSB. In the pages that follow you can read about this year's Catholic Studies conference – "Freedom of (and from) Religion: Debates over the Accommodation of Religion in the Public Sphere" – and the visit of literature scholar Regina Schwartz, the 2015 Tipton Distinguished Visiting Professor, as well as updates on faculty and student activities. Among the new developments, we are pleased to announce the extra-curricular Interfaith Initiative that we have launched in conjunction with the Walter H. Capps Center and to welcome first year student, Shelby King, as our new newsletter editor.

Ann Taves

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Catholic Studies Conference 2015: *Religion & the Public Sphere*



From May 30 to April 2, we welcomed an impressive group of scholars, graduate students, and activists to take part in our annual Catholic Studies conference, “Freedom of (and from) Religion: Debates over the Accommodation of Religion in the Public Sphere.” Twenty-one participants from the United States, Switzerland, England, and Canada came together to explore the complex ways in which religion and law interact, attending carefully to both legal definitions of religion and limitations to religious freedom.

Professor Ann Taves introduced the conference with an acknowledgment of the Cordano Endowment, which made it possible, and the role of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops’ concerns surrounding religious liberty, which provided the inspiration for this year’s focus.

We were honored to have Dr. Winnifred Sullivan deliver the keynote address on Thursday evening.



A professor of religious studies and law at the University of Indiana–Bloomington and author of numerous books on the topic including *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*, Sullivan is a leading figure in the field who brings exciting questions that furthers our

thinking on religion and law in important ways. Her keynote address -- “What Happened in Indiana? Did Religious Freedom Jump the Shark?” -- considered the state’s recent religious freedom law (RFRA) that gave business owners the ability to refuse service in cases that violate religious commitments.

In the following days, we heard a variety of interdisciplinary and international perspectives on issues ranging from religious markers on military headstones to the difficulty of legally defining who qualifies as a ‘minister.’ Presenters from anthropology, law, political science, religious studies, philosophy, and geography provided insights and questions that challenged and broadened the way that religion and law our understanding of the complex relationship between religion and law in the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

Given the heavy investment of the US Catholic Bishops Conference in this issue, the predominance of Catholic justices on the Supreme Court, and the diversity of views among lay Catholics, we will be interested to see how these issues play out in the near future.

This year’s Catholic Studies conference was organized by Kolby Knight with the help of Professors Kathleen Moore and Ann Taves.

Kolby Knight



Student Spotlight: Lauren Horn Griffin



History, the flagship publication of the American Historical Association on teaching and professional issues.

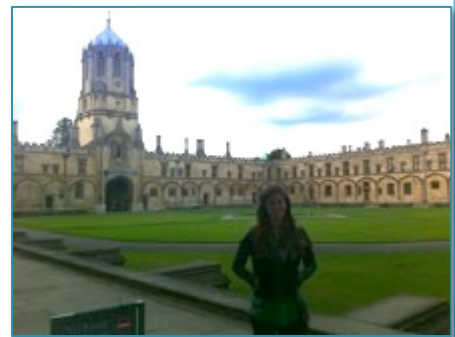
Lauren Griffin entered the doctoral program in 2010 with a Cordano Fellowship and is preparing for graduation in the fall with a specialization in early modern British Catholicism. Lauren's research focuses on devotion to saints – including texts, rituals, images, and material culture – and its relationship to the wider changes within early modern Britain. She uses these sources to weave a picture of life of the communities that produced them, and to show how early modern practitioners understood their own medieval traditions in the context of the religious Reformations. Her dissertation, "The Battle for Bede: Christian Origin Narratives and Uses of the Past in Early Modern England," presents early modern attitudes toward medieval Christianity, particularly the narratives of the saints who brought Christianity to England. These tales reveal the creative ways in which early modern Catholics interpreted

the past in the context of the complex political dynamics of the Reformations Era. Analysis of the saints' narratives allowed her to examine various aspects of these Catholic communities, including their relationships with civil authority, reformers, and Rome.

Lauren also chairs the Catholic Studies Unit for the American Academy of Religion Western Region, which recently held its annual conference in Santa Clara. In honor of the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* (the Vatican II Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions), she organized two panels that discussed Catholicism's interaction with other religious traditions, as well as *Nostra Aetate's* historical and dialogical significance, its postconciliar developments, its implications for religious pluralism, and its impact on Catholic identity and issues of "otherness."

In addition to the PhD, Lauren earned an M.A. in History, an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Emphasis in Medieval Studies, and a Certificate in College and University Teaching. Her article, "How Do Humanities Courses Teach Skills," has been accepted by *Perspectives on*

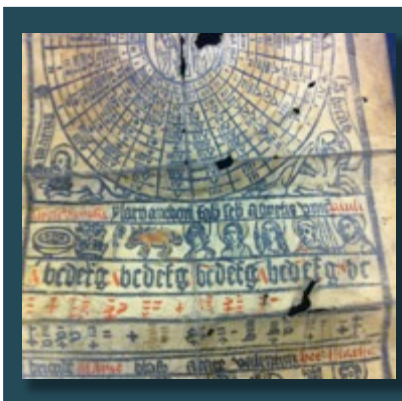
She received a prestigious Huntington Library Exchange Fellowship that allowed her to spend last fall at



Oxford as a Visiting Research Fellow at Corpus Christi College. She conducted archival research at the Bodleian Library, the British Library, and the Jesuit Archives in London, and presented chapters of her work at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion, the American Catholic Historical Association, and the American Society of Church History. She recently received UCSB's Graduate Division Dissertation Completion Fellowship and will be graduating next quarter.

We congratulate her on her many academic achievements, thank her for her labors as editor of the first four Catholic Studies Newsletters, and wish her the best of luck as she applies for academic jobs this fall!

Shelby King with Lauren Griffin



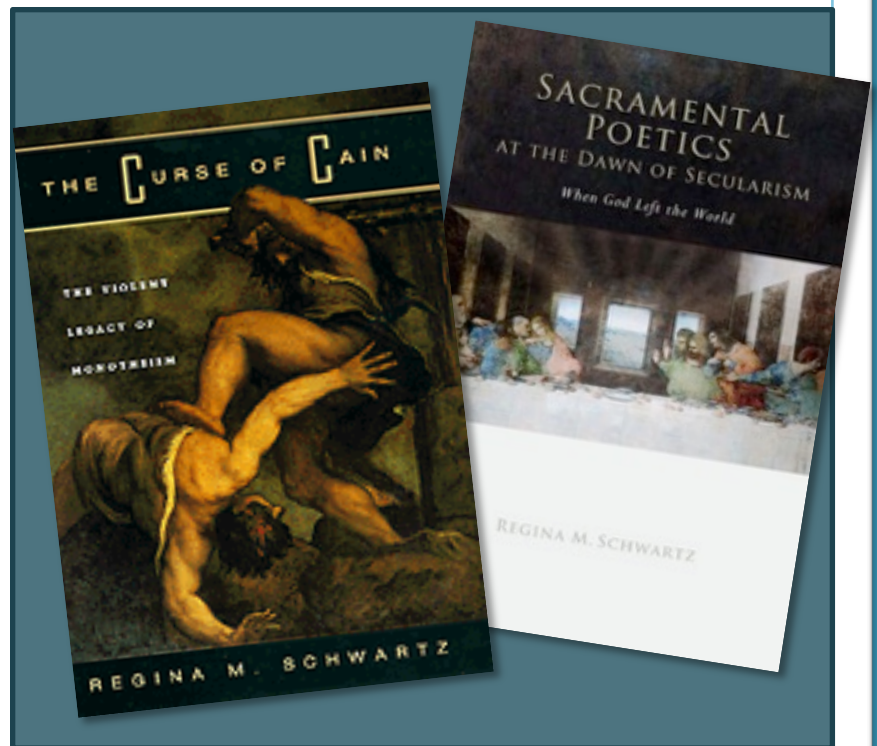
REGINA SCHWARTZ

Tipton Visiting Professor in Catholic Studies for Winter 2015

Regina Schwartz, the J.E. and Lillian Byrne Tipton Distinguished Visiting Professor in Religious Studies at UC Santa Barbara for Winter 2015, is a Professor of English at Northwestern University. She is the author of the James Holly Hanford Book Award winning *Remembering and Repeating: On Milton's Theology and Poetics* (1988), the Pulitzer nominated book *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (1997), and most recently published, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism*. She has just completed work on her newest book, *Justice: What's Love (and Shakespeare) Got to Do With It?*



In March, Professor Schwartz presented her research in a talk entitled "Love Your Enemies: Retribution and Forgiveness." She discussed the stark and often problematic contrast between law and Christianity. Whereas law upholds justice by "the reciprocity code," Jesus taught his followers to love their enemies. Despite their radically opposing judicial traditions, this contradictory relationship between Christianity and the law is nevertheless maintained for many worldwide. This talk thus reflects her continuing engagement with justice and the contexts in which it requires (or resists) clarification, from Shakespeare to the Hebrew Bible.



The J.E. & Lillian Byrne Tipton Distinguished Visiting Professorship in Catholic Studies enables the Department of Religious Studies to bring outstanding scholars and public figures to UCSB for a quarter or longer to teach, present public lectures, and conduct research.

RS 25: Global Catholicism Today

This course, designed and launched by Ann Taves in 2011 with Jennifer Hahn as her teaching assistant, has been offered four times in the past five years. The course provides an introduction to Roman Catholicism as a global religion with particular attention to the basic structures, beliefs, and practices of the church as they are envisioned universally in Rome and lived out locally in different parts of the world today. To understand the church's teachings and practices as they are envisioned universally, the lectures draw on Vatican approved texts, such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the liturgy of the Mass, papal encyclicals, and documents produced by particular Vatican congregations.



To appreciate something of the range of viewpoints of Catholics around the world, students research particular Catholic figures from around the world, including church leaders (bishops, cardinals, religious), prominent lay Catholics (political figures, activists), and ordinary parishioners; monitor two Catholic news sources to follow the news as it comes out of Rome and their character's local area; and write a weekly blog post reflecting on developments in the Catholic world from the perspective of their character.

Due to the emphasis on the interplay and tension between the universal and particular

as it is playing itself out in the Church today, the course is updated each time it is taught to reflect current issues. Monumental developments in the Church over the last few years – the election of Pope Francis, his reforms of the curia, the American bishops' religious liberty initiative, sex abuse scandals globally, the conclusion of the investigation of U.S. women religious – have made this a particularly exciting time to teach the course.

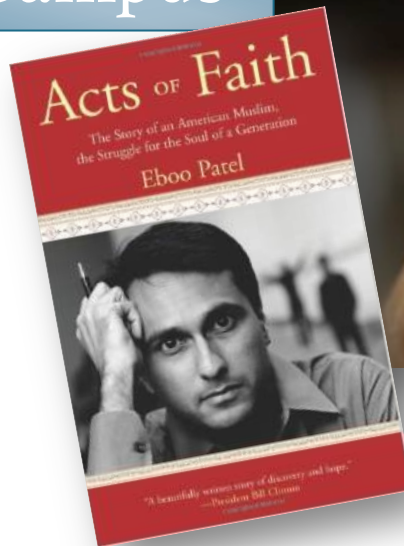


Each year the students participate in a Synod modeled on recent synods in Rome. This year students researched how their characters and the bishops' conferences had contributed to the 2014 Synod on the Family and prepared a statement to give to Pope Francis at the 2015 Synod summarizing their characters' likely stance on the three hot topics of the synod: whether or not to allow divorced and remarried Catholics to take communion, how welcoming the Church should be to homosexuals, and how positive the Church should be in its response to other "irregular" relationships. The wide range of Catholic figures represented by our students, including Cardinal George Pell and excommunicated woman Bishop Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger, made for a lively and educational discussion!

Ann Taves and Jennifer Hahn

The New Interfaith Initiative on Campus

In the spirit of Father Virgil's longstanding commitment to interfaith dialogue and cooperation, the Catholic Studies committee approved the launching of an extracurricular Interfaith Initiative in conjunction with the Capps Center for Religion, Ethics, and Public Life, which draws on the vision of interfaith cooperation through service pioneered by Eboo Patel's Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC). [For more on Eboo Patel and the IFYC, see *Acts of Faith* (2010) and *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America* (2013).] To launch the initiative, the Cordano Endowment funded four students to attend an IFYC sponsored Interfaith Leadership Institute in Los Angeles. Ann Taves and Kelli Coleman Moore, staff person in the Capps Center, accompanied the students and attended special sessions for "Interfaith Allies." Since then, the four students, with the support of Taves and Coleman Moore, have created a club



on campus dedicated to interfaith cooperation and action named Better Together at UCSB. Better Together hosted its first event on Wednesday, April 29th in the Student Associations building. The "Speed-faithing," as they called it, brought a number of students, faculty, and staff together to introduce their individual religious and non-religious perspectives, and began a discussion on core concerns. Their next event is scheduled for early June in the Manzanita Village.

To complement these student led activities, Taves and Coleman Moore are working with the Capps Center and the Department of Religious Studies to develop an Interfaith Literacy and Leadership Program. This one-year service-learning program is intended to introduce students to an understanding of interfaith literacy and leadership grounded in appreciative inquiry and social action. In addition to funding and in kind contributions from the Cordano Endowment, the Department of Religious Studies, and the Capps Center, we have submitted a grant proposal in response to a call from the Executive Vice Chancellor's Office to enable us to further develop this curricular aspect of the initiative.

Ann Taves



Faculty and Student News



Professor Ann Taves's forthcoming book, *Revelatory Events: Experience and Appraisal in the Emergence of New Spiritual Paths*, uses historical and cognitive science methods to better understand the role of experiences in the emergence of religious movements. In light of her research, she was asked to give a paper at a conference on religious experience at the University of Notre Dame, May 7-9, 2015 discussing the role that cognitive science can play in our understanding of religious experiences. In the course of the meeting, she had several long conversations with Paul Gavriyuk, Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas and co-editor with theologian Sarah Coakley of a new book on *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*. Gavriyuk has invited her to serve as a consultant on the next stages of the project, which will seek to explore these interior perceptions in phenomenological and cognitive terms and invited her to give a public lecture and meet with the Interdisciplinary Faculty Colloquium on Models of Spiritual Perception at the University of St. Thomas in November. This collaboration provides an exciting opportunity for integrating her historical work with her on-going research on religion, experience, and mind.

Kolby Knight is in his second year and as indicated in last year's newsletter has continued his research on anti-Catholicism in nineteenth century legal battles concerning the public funding of parochial schools. He is also currently researching black Catholics and their relationship to the Harlem Renaissance. This year, Kolby attended the American Catholic Historical Association in New York City, where he presented a paper entitled "The New Nonsectarianism: Public Religion in an Age of Secularization" and attended the Presidential Luncheon at the ACHA located at the church of St. Paul the Apostle. He also served as chief organizer for this year's Catholic studies conference on "Freedom of (and from) Religion." Looking forward, Kolby will be presenting a paper titled "The Scythe of Secularity: Schools, Capitalism, and the Decapitation of Religion in 1894" at the American Academy of Religion, which reflects his continuing research on public school debates in New York State. He will also chair the Catholic Studies section at the upcoming AAR-Western Regional meeting.



Lauren Horn Griffin is preparing for her graduation next quarter. Last year, she created an exploratory session for the national meeting of the American Academy of Religion titled "Cross-Cultural and Interreligious Explorations of Hagiography," which discussed the uses of hagiography in various cultures. She also worked with the University's Instructional Development organization to train other graduate instructors, designing /leading pedagogy workshops. As she finishes up her dissertation and prepares to enter the academic job market, she is working as the Communications Consultant for the Institute for Diversity a Civic Life, a non-profit organization working to foster a deeper understanding of religious and cultural diversity and to promote a more inclusive public sphere through community education and research.

Yevgeniy Runkevich will be entering the doctoral program in Fall 2015 with support from the Cordano Endowment to study New Testament, Early Christianity, and other religions of the ancient Greco-Roman world. Runkevich, who completed a MA at Harvard Divinity School, is particularly interested in gender and power dynamics in the earliest Christian communities.

