

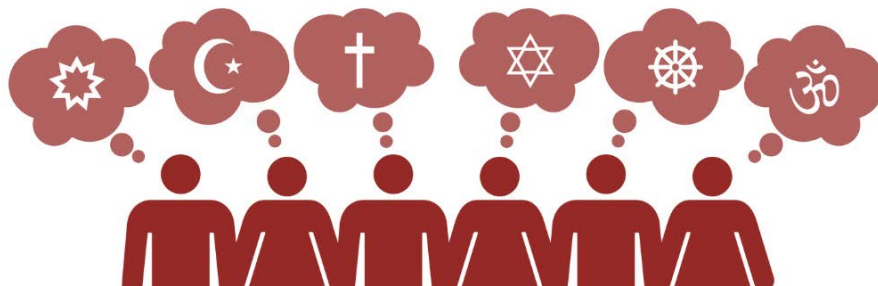


# COLLEGE *of* CHARLESTON

DEPARTMENT OF  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES



## Fall 2019 Newsletter



## From the Chair



Dr. Elijah Siegler  
Professor and Chair of Religious Studies



*Dear Students, Alumni, and Friends of the Department,*

*It's been an eventful few years here at 4 Glebe St.*

*We continue to offer students a lot of personalized educational opportunities. For example, every year for the past five or six years, one Religious Studies major has interned with the Charleston Interreligious Council, a local non-profit that brings different religious groups together for dialogue and mutual understanding. And last summer, some lucky RELS students went to India with Dr. Bjerken and Dr. LeVasseur. Dr. Lowe hopes to lead a RELS trip to Haiti in summer 2021.*

*And of course, we continue to offer regularly scheduled free public lectures by top scholars from around the country. This newsletter lists some exciting upcoming lectures...*

*For more information, follow us on Instagram or on Facebook. And always feel free to stay in touch with any of your favorite professors...*

*Elijah Siegler*  
*Professor and Chair*

# Faculty and Staff News

Since the last newsletter, Religious Studies has said hello to new faculty and staff, celebrated promotions and renewals, and bid fond farewells to esteemed faculty who retired after many years of service to the college and RELS department.

**Assistant Professor, Dr. Lenny Lowe** joined the college in Fall 2017 after receiving his Ph.D. from the Uni. of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. Dr. Lowe's areas of expertise include the history of Global Christianity, Pentecostalism, Vodou and other religions of the Caribbean, anthropology of religion and ethnography. Dr. Lowe lived, taught and researched religion in Haiti for many years. He hopes to lead a Study Aboard there Summer 2021.

**Adjunct Faculty, Dr. Jeremy Fisher** joined the department in the Fall 2019. This fall Professor Fisher successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation at the Uni. of Virginia – Charlottesville. Some of Dr. Fisher's research areas are Social and Political Philosophy/Theology, Secularism and Atheism, and Philosophical and Religious Ethics. This fall he is teaching Intro to World Religions, and in the spring his Approaches to Religion courses will focus on religion and protest.

**Administrative Assistant, Veronica Butler-Byrd** came to the department in April 2017. Ms. Butler-Byrd received her B.A. degree from the Uni. of Memphis in African/African-American Studies, has 20+ years experience as an administrative/accounting professional, and was the admin for the Chemistry/Biochemistry department here at CofC.

**Visiting Assistant Professor, and CofC alum (97), Dr. Todd LeVasseur** was promoted to Director of Environmental Studies in July 2015. Then in July 2016, he became director of the QEP program on Sustainability Literacy.

**Assistant Professor, Dr. Matthew Cressler, Senior Instructor, Professor Louise Doire, and Dr. Lowe** successfully completed Third-Year Reviews and renewal as Senior Instructor respectively. In all cases, the Department Evaluation Panel was impressed with their stellar accomplishments in the classroom and their service to the College.

The RELS department also said goodbye to three outstanding professors and scholars. In 2017, **Dr. Margaret Cormack** retired and moved to Iceland fulltime. In 2018 and 2019, two more giants of our department retired— **Dr. June McDaniel** (who still resides in Charleston) and **Dr. Lee Irwin** (who moved to Berea, Kentucky). All three of our recently retired senior colleagues were productive scholars, dedicated teachers, and valued colleagues; we miss them all!



From top to bottom, left to right:  
Dr. Lowe, Ms. Butler-Byrd, Dr. LeVasseur, Dr. Cressler,  
Prof. Doire, Dr. Cormack, Dr. McDaniel,  
and Dr. Irwin



## The Alumni Corner

### RELIGIOUS STUDIES GRADUATING CLASS OF 2019



From left to right: Hilary Rockett (HSS Scholar and Departmental Honors), Lauren DeFeo (HSS Scholar and Departmental Honors), Anne Wrona, Amanda Wood (Departmental Honors), Megan White and Lee Duncan



### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



**Dr. Michael Altman ('06)** and his wife **Emily ('06)** met and fell in love while both majoring in Religious Studies at CofC. The career paths they took after graduation couldn't be more different. Dr. Altman is a newly, tenured faculty member in Religious Studies at the Uni. of Alabama, and Ms. Altman is a doula and lactation consultant. Husband and wife both respect and acknowledge how majoring in religious studies helped them develop skills needed to excel in their chosen occupations. Here are a few words from them about their experience, and how they still rely on those lessons learned 13 years ago.

Dr. Altman:

"Between the two of us, I think the effect of my RELS degree is the one that's obvious. I went on to get a PhD and now I work in a religious studies department. But what I think is less obvious is how much my time in the department at C of C prepared me for this career. I read Russell McCutcheon's work as an undergrad and now I work a few doors down from him in our department here. The kind of religious studies that the department at C of C does, asking questions about power, authority, culture, and social formations, prepared me to ask those questions as I moved on to grad school and the professoriate. I discovered religious studies at the College and the department put me on the path toward the career I enjoy now."

Mrs. Altman:

"Currently, I work as a birth doula and lactation consultant, providing non-medical support to pregnant, laboring, and nursing mothers and babies. My RELS degree has been a huge help for me as I have found my own career path. Religious Studies taught me critical thinking and communication skills that I use in my career as a birth doula. But even more importantly, Religious Studies taught me how to learn new things quickly. That was so helpful when I decided to pursue training in birth work. Religious studies is more than just learning about world religions, it's learning how to work with difference, learn new skills, and interpret the world around you. I use that everyday."

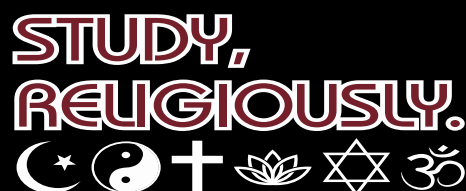


# RELS Spring 2020 Course Offerings

(and Courses Taught by RELS Faculty)

Course	CRN	Title	Meeting Days	Meeting Times	Instructor
<b>RELS101.02</b>	21193	Approaches to Religion: Pilgrimage to Sacred Places in North America, India and Tibet	TR	1215-130	Bjerken
<b>RELS101.03</b>	23220	Approaches to Religion: Messiahs & Messianic Movements	MW	200-315	Huddlestun
<b>RELS101.04</b>	21324	Approaches to Religion: Messiahs & Messianic Movements	MW	400-515	Huddlestun
<b>RELS101.05</b>	23221	Approaches to Religion: Religion and Protest	MWF	900-950	Fisher
<b>RELS101.06</b>	23222	Approaches to Religion: Religion and Protest	MWF	1000-1050	Fisher
<b>RELS105.01</b>	20736	Intro to World Religions	MWF	1100-1150	Doire
<b>RELS105.02</b>	20737	Intro to World Religions	MWF	1200-1250	Doire
<b>RELS105.03</b>	20738	Intro to World Religions	TR	925-1040	Lowe
<b>RELS105.04</b>	21599	Intro to World Religions	TR	1050-1205	Lowe
<b>RELS115.01</b>	21999	Religion in Society: Black Religion and Black Nationalism	TR	140-255	Cressler
<b>RELS120.01</b>	21974	Religion, Art, and Culture: The Bible and Modern Culture and Media	TR	1050-1205	Huddlestun
<b>RELS205.01</b>	23223	Sacred Texts of the East and their Modern Meanings in the West	TR	925-1040	Bjerken
<b>RELS210.01</b>	21097	Theories in Study of Religions	TR	140-255	Lowe
<b>RELS248.01</b>	23224	Religious Traditions of China & Japan	MWF	1100-1150	Siegler
<b>RELS250.01</b>	23225	Religion in America	TR	1215-130	Cressler
<b>RELS276.01</b>	23226	Religion and the Environment	MWF	1000-1050	LeVasseur
<b>RELS315.01</b>	23227	New Religious Movements	TR	305-420	Gallagher
<b>RELS451.01</b>	21195	Capstone Colloquium	M	400-450	Bjerken
<b>WGST200.01</b>	20266	Intro to Women's and Gender Studies	MW	200-315	Doire
<b>HONS381.03</b>	21098	Self and Society in Chinese and Japanese Religious Traditions	MWF	900-950	Siegler
<b>HONS381.06</b>	21953	Black Religion and Black Nationalism: From Slave Rebellions to #BlackLivesMatter	TR	925-1040	Cressler
<b>HONS381.09</b>	23387	Cults and Conversion in Modern America	TR	140-255	Gallagher

**SPRING 2020 REGISTRATION  
BEGINS 10/28/2019!!!  
CONTACT YOUR ADVISOR.**





*Make a Difference!*  
**DONATE**



*Thank you*



Everyone can be a philanthropist to the College of Charleston. Gifts to the Religious Studies Foundation account are vital to supporting student study abroad, internship opportunities, and travel to attend professional conferences. Most importantly, your annual gift gives us the ultimate flexibility-to seize opportunities that will advance the mission of the school and address unforeseen challenges faced by faculty and students as they arise.

Your investment is the ultimate vote of confidence in everything Religious Studies at the College of Charleston stands for and everything it can become.

To make an online donation please click on the link <http://religiousstudies.cofc.edu/giving/index.php>, select "other" in the designation section, then indicate that you want to contribute to the Religious Studies Fund (R434) in the comments section.

## We Would Love to Hear from You!

The Department of Religious Studies at the College of Charleston has educated students since 2005. We would love to hear what those students are up to now. Let us know about the exciting professional and personal milestones you've reached since leaving the College. You can email Dr. Siegler or Ms. Butler-Byrd with the details at [sieglere@cofc.edu](mailto:sieglere@cofc.edu) or [butlervc@cofc.edu](mailto:butlervc@cofc.edu).



## College of Charleston

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