

Religious Studies

Alumni Newsletter

Indiana University

Vol. 24/No. 2 • Spring 2006

From the chair

Recurring cycles characterize department's activities

I write from the center of a whirlwind created by the tail end of another busy semester. It is hard to believe that one more year is coming to a close, but the bare trees on campus provide testament to the passage of time. When the semester began these same trees were adorned with robust green foliage that shaded the newly returned students from an intense sun. As we approached midterm, their leaves turned brilliant shades of red and gold, and the students stretched out in the direct sunshine to enjoy their beauty. Then, finals were upon us, and campus emptied as everyone scattered for winter break. The tall silent sentinels guarded the campus until the students returned and began to move toward the new growth that lies ahead.

Recurring cycles characterize much of our life here at Indiana University. I prepared for my third year as chair after another busy summer, highlighted with a 10-day backpacking trip in the high country of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California after finishing the manuscript for my forthcoming book on the Yamuna River of India. I participated in yet another exciting permaculture course at the Lazy Black Bear retreat in the middle of the Hoosier National Forest, where students studied design systems for creating sustainable human communities that are in harmony with their natural environment. And I traveled to Santa Fe, N.M., to help plan another Bioneers Conference (www.bioneers.org). Bioneers is a global educational forum to showcase practical and visionary solutions for restoring the Earth and its people. IU was one of 17 sites this year to host live downlink satellite conferences that broadcast the inspirational national program from San Rafael, Calif., and included local talks and workshops. This was IU's third Bloomington Bioneers Conference, focusing on

"Sustainability: The Campus-Community Connection." This year's speakers included Bloomington City Council President Andy Ruff and Councilmember Dave Rolo, who spoke on "Sustainable Bloomington: Adapting Our City for a Green Future," and Peter Bane, a master permaculture teacher, who spoke on "Education from a Permaculture Perspective." Five workshops explored new urbanism, youth activism, transformative language, urban agriculture, and transportation for the new century.

We began our departmental celebrations this fall in the glass atrium of the IU Art Museum with a welcoming party for our

new graduate students. This year five new doctoral students join us: Joy Brennan, Nicole Karapanagiotis, Barbara Krawcowicz, Yamine Mermer, and Brad Storin; and one new student has entered our master's program: Cheryl Cottine. We also held a welcome-back party for our energetic undergraduates, which was organized by our new undergraduate adviser and communications officer, April Lane. Having received both her BA and MA from our department, April knows our world well.

With a mixture of sorrow and delight, the department is preparing for another
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Mary Jo Weaver to retire in May 2006

While we wish Mary Jo Weaver the very best for a well-deserved retirement, Sycamore Hall will not be the same without her! Weaver, esteemed scholar and innovator of courses such as Star Trek and Religion, will retire this May after 31 years at Indiana University.

In keeping with departmental tradition, Weaver will give a public lecture, titled "As Much Fun Learning as Teaching," at 4 p.m. in Woodburn Hall 101, on Friday, April 7, followed by a reception to mark her retirement at 5 p.m. The lecture location will be posted soon on our Web site (www.indiana.edu/~relstud), and, following the lecture, the reception will be held in the University Club of the Indiana Memorial Union.

Please mark your calendars for this very special event — all are most welcome! A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the Indiana Memorial Union on campus for those who will be travel-



Mary Jo Weaver

ing from out of town. Please call (800) 209-8145 to make your reservation and mention the religious studies/Weaver retirement event. Rooms will be held until March 23, 2006.

From the chair

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monumental retirement this spring. On April 7, 2006, we will celebrate the long and illustrious career of Mary Jo Weaver, a renowned scholar of American religions, on the occasion of her retirement at the end of this academic year. Mary Jo will give a public lecture at 4 p.m. on April 7 titled, "As Much Fun Learning as Teaching." Her talk will be followed by a reception in the University Club. Please plan to join us for what promises to be a memorable event. See our Web site for further information. It is with a degree of sadness that I also inform you of the departure

of Jan Nattier and John McRae, who are leaving IU to take up permanent research positions in Japan. They will be missed sorely, but we wish them well in their new academic adventure on the other side of the Pacific.

Although we are losing a few distinguished members of the department, the remaining faculty members have been very productive. I count amongst our faculty's publications 12 books that either were published within the last year or are currently in press. Many of these will be listed in the "Faculty News." I am also delighted to announce that two professors in the Department of History

have joined us as adjunct members of the Department of Religious Studies. Edward Linenthal, who received a PhD in religious studies from the University of California-Santa Barbara, has published several books on American religions and is currently the editor of the *Journal of American History*. Edward Watts, who received a PhD in history from Yale University, is a specialist in the religions of late antiquity and has published widely in this area. Moreover, we continue to be active in our searches for new faculty. At this point in time, I can say nothing definitive about some exciting developments under way, but watch for word in the summer 2006 newsletter about new faculty hires.

I close as I prepare to travel to India to conduct preliminary research for my next book project on tree shrines and to see my daughter Meagan, an IU religious studies major who is currently spending the year in Banaras, India, on a University of Wisconsin program. Before I leave, I want to encourage you all to stay in touch with the department.

— David Haberman

David Haberman, first row, third from right, with the 2005 permaculture class as they prepare to depart for Hoosier National



Bioneers 2005

Faculty news

Faculty news

David Brakke has become the editor of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, which is sponsored by the North American Patristics Society and published by Johns Hopkins University Press. In the summer of 2005, the editorial office moved to IU from Duke University, and doctoral candidate Ellen Muehlberger now serves as the journal's editorial assistant. In June 2005, Brakke gathered with other scholars of early Egyptian monasticism at Yale University to begin a long-term project of editing the discourses of Shenoute of Atripe, who led the large White Monastery in Egypt from about 385 to 465 C.E. Shenoute's numerous works, which survive fragmentarily in the original Coptic, provide some of the most extensive and vivid evidence for monastic life in this early period. In October 2005, Brakke gave a paper titled "Care for the Poor and Fear of Poverty: Monastic Cultivation of Economic and Spiritual Vulnerability in Fourth-Century Egypt" at a conference on Wealth and Poverty in Early Christianity, hosted by the Stephen and Catherine Pappas Patristic Institute, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, in Brookline, Mass. At the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in Philadelphia in November 2005, he appeared on two panels: an AAR panel that reviewed Elizabeth A. Clark's new book, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*, and a panel in the SBL that discussed the themes of "boundaries, identity, and orthodoxy" in early Judaism and Christianity. *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, a book that Brakke co-edited with Steven Weitzman and former colleague Michael Satlow, was published by Indiana University Press in October 2005. This book takes issue with scholars who argue that the self was born in the modern West and instead explores how ancient Mediterranean religious communities imagined the human self in relation to God and others. It grew out of a conference on this theme held in Bloomington in September 2003. In addition to co-editing the volume, Brakke contributed a chapter called "Making Public the Monastic Life: Reading the Self in Evagrius Ponticus' Talking Back." Brakke is currently serving as vice president of IU's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and next year will serve as president.

Rob Campany, newly appointed director of graduate studies, was the recipient of the Trustees Teaching Award for Teaching Excellence, Department of Religious

Department welcomes Lisa Sideris

The Department of Religious Studies is thrilled to welcome a familiar face back to IU! Lisa Sideris earned her PhD in our department in 2000 and returned in 2005 as religious studies faculty. Before coming back to IU, Sideris taught at Pace University for one year and at McGill University for three years. Sideris's research interests lie at the intersection of religion, science, and environmental ethics. She is especially interested in locating common ground between religious and evolutionary accounts of nature and natural suffering, as well as the current controversies surrounding evolutionary theory, such as "intelligent design." She has recently completed an edited collection of interdisciplinary essays on the life and work of Rachel Carson. Sideris will be teaching courses for the department on environmental ethics, medical ethics, and evolution and ethics in the coming months.



Lisa Sideris

Studies, Indiana University (2005). In 2005 he published "The Meanings of Cuisines of Transcendence in Late Classical and Early Medieval China," *T'oung Pao* 91 (2005):1-57; "Living off the Books: Fifty Ways to Dodge Ming [Preallotted Lifespan] in Early Medieval China," in *The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment, and Fate in Chinese Culture*, C. Lupke, ed., University of Hawaii Press, 129-150; "Long-Distance Specialists in Early Medieval China," in *Literature, Religion, and East/West Comparison: Essays in Honor of Anthony C. Yu*, Eric Ziolkowski, ed., University of Delaware Press, 109-124; and "Eating Better than Gods and Ancestors," in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, ed. Roel Sterckx, Palgrave Press, 96-122. He has recently had "Secrecy and Display in the Quest for Transcendence in China, ca. 220 B.C.E.-330 C.E.," in *History of Religions* 45.4, accepted for publication in May 2006. Campany has also delivered several invited talks this past year, including, "'Religion(s)' in Early Medieval China," presented at conference "'Religion' in China: Rethinking Indigenous and Imported Categories of Thought," Fairbank Center, Harvard University, May 2005; "Two Religious Thinkers of the Early Eastern Jin: Ge Hong and Gan Bao in Multiple Contexts," Workshop on the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420 C.E.), Fairbank Center/Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University, May 2005; "Adepts and Their Communities (pre-350 C.E.)," New Perspectives on Daoist Religion: A Symposium in Celebration of The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang, University of Chicago, October 2005; "Adepts and Their Com-

munities," Early Medieval China workshop, Columbia University, December 2005; and in early January 2006 he traveled to Singapore to deliver a paper at a conference on early medieval Chinese religion and thought. In addition, Campany was elected in 2005 to serve another term (after having served two terms in the 1990s) on the board of directors for the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, the main international professional society in the area of Chinese religions. Campany is serving as the director of graduate studies for the department and has coordinated the process by which faculty in the Department of Religious Studies have crafted a new doctoral program in Chinese religions (description available on the Department of Religious Studies Web site at www.indiana.edu/~relstud).

David Drewes presented a paper titled "Dharmabhanakas in Indian Mahayana" in November 2005 in Philadelphia at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting.

Constance Furey's first book, *Erasmus, Contarini, and the Religious Republic of Letters*, appeared with Cambridge University Press this past September. She's spending this year working on her next project, *Religious Relationships in Devotional Poetry: Gender and Genre in Renaissance England*, while a research fellow and visiting assistant professor at the Women's



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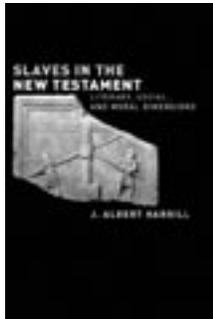
Faculty news

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Studies in Religion Program at Harvard Divinity School. Her most recent publication is “Invective and Exposure in Erasmus, More, and Luther” in *Harvard Theological Review* (October 2005), and her article “The Utopia of Desire in Aemilia Lanyer’s Poetry” has been accepted for publication in a special issue of *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, to appear in fall 2006. She recently presented another paper on Lanyer, a 17th-century English poet, at the Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies in San Antonio. During the spring semester, she will present papers on her current research at Harvard, Vanderbilt, Brown, and the Renaissance Society of America.

David L. Haberman has been editing his manuscript *River of Love in the Age of Pollution: The Yamuna River of Northern India*, which is slated for publication this spring by the University of California Press. He has begun work on his next book project, which is a study of tree shrines in northern India. He delivered a plenary address titled “The Path of Devotional Yoga: Loving Service to Rivers and More” at the First International Green Yoga Conference, held in September 2005 in Santa Cruz, Calif. In October 2005, he was the featured speaker at Miami University’s annual celebration of Mahatma Gandhi. The title of his talk was “Gandhi and Deep Ecology.”

Bert Harrill’s new book, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006 (340 pages, cloth and paper) came out in October 2005. He also published an article, “The Apostle Paul on the Slave Self: An Interpretation of Romans 7,” in *Religion and the Self in*



Antiquity, edited by David Brakke, Steven Weitzman, and Michael Satlow (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). He participated in a roundtable discussion of his new book at the 60th General Meeting, Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenburg, Halle, Germany. A conference grant to attend the meeting was awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in August 2005. He was a panelist for “Reassessing Social Status in the First-Century Assemblies” at the annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Archaeology

of Religion in the Roman World Section, Philadelphia, in November 2005, and for “Families — A Useful Category in Early Christian Studies?” at the annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Early Christian Families Group, Philadelphia, in November 2005. He gave two campus presentations of “The Canonization of the Bible” at the Campus Skeptics Alliance in September 2005, and he hosted an Undergraduate Religious Studies Association Movie Night in October, which featured “God and Politics — The Battle for the Bible.”

Nancy Levene was a respondent at a symposium on Shinran in comparative context at Colgate University this past summer. This fall, she wrote a review of two books on Spinoza for the *Association of Jewish Studies Review*. In December, she was chair and respondent on a panel titled “On the Intersection of Theory and Practice: a Conversation about Justice amongst Scholars, Rabbis, and Activists” at the Association of Jewish Studies Annual Meeting. In the spring, she will have an article and a response to another article published in a special issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* on the topic of “The Future of the Study of Religion in the Academy.”

Rebecca Manring’s first book, *Reconstructing Tradition: Advaita Acarya and Gaudiya Vaisnavism at the Cusp of the 20th Century*, was published by Columbia University Press in June 2005, and it is already receiving favorable attention in her field. She visited India over the winter break (along with her husband) to present copies of the book to the many colleagues in and around Kolkata who helped with the research. Her “Catalogue of the Sukumar Sen Manuscript Collection,” which includes a succinct description of the state of many libraries in India as well as of this specific and very important collection, will be out by the time you read this. She has begun work on a collaborative project with a number of other religious studies scholars on the uses and roles of sectarian grammars in India. Her contribution will be a detailed analysis of Jiva Gosvamin’s “Grammar of the Nectar of the Lord’s Name,” a 17th-century Sanskrit grammar in which all of the rules are expressed in Vaishnava terminology. She has already presented two papers on this project, and she expects to present on further aspects of the text at the



annual meeting of the American Oriental Society in Seattle in March and at the triennial World Sanskrit Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, in July. She has organized a panel of her collaborators working on grammars produced in other Indian sectarian traditions for the 2006 AAR as well. Students in her honors section of R153 this fall spent the semester working on group inquiry projects, exploring various aspects of Asian religions. Some of the groups chose to explore Asian religions in Indiana, visiting such sites as the Sikh Gurdwara in Indianapolis and the two local Tibetan Buddhist centers for lengthy conversations, while one group interviewed a local Jain family to see how the commitment to non-violence plays out in the daily lives of Jains. The work of these students resulted in the production of two DVDs that she will be able to use in future classes, as well as some tasty snacks they served to the class. She incited and chaired IU’s first-ever graduate student panel at the annual Conference on South Asia held at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in October. (IU religious studies students Carole Barnsley, Patton Burchett, and Aimee Hamilton-Schwartz were joined by IU political science student Shanna Dietz for a stimulating panel that generated some enthusiastic discussion.)

Richard Miller delivered the lecture “The Ethics of Preventive War” for the Sturm Dialogue with Henry Shue of Oxford University at Bucknell University in May 2005. He continues to work on his manuscript, “9/11, War, and Moral Memory.” He has published “Role Responsibility in Pediatrics: Appeasing or Transforming Parental Demands?” in *Ethical Dilemmas in Pediatrics: Cases and Commentaries*, ed. Lorry R. Frankel, Ammon Goldworth, Mary V. Rorty, and William A. Silverman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21-29; “On Making a Cultural Turn in Religious Ethics,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 33 (September 2005): 409-43; and “Rules” in *The Oxford Handbook of Theological Ethics*, ed. Gilbert Meilaender and William Werpehowski (New York: Oxford University Press), 220-36. Miller is also teaching a new course in the department: the first half of a two-semester survey, From Christian Ethics to Social Criticism. And, in his capacity as director of the Poynter Center, he is directing a new interdisciplinary faculty seminar, focusing this year on “Nature in the Scientific and Moral Imagination.”

Lisa Sideris recently completed four essays for four books/anthologies, all of them on themes of religion, evolution, and environmentalism. One is a chapter in a forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Religion and*

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Student Notes

Graduate news

Ellen Muhlburger presented her paper “The Angelic Life Revisited” at the Ancient Studies Colloquium at IU. She was also awarded a College of Arts and Sciences Travel Grant to go to the Society for Biblical Literature meeting in Philadelphia.

Aimee Hamilton-Schwartz organized a panel called “South Asia Power Relations: Religious and Political Perspectives” for the 34th Annual Conference on South Asia at the Center for South Asia at University of Wisconsin–Madison in October 2005 and presented her paper, “The Meaningful Body: Ascetic Practice of Kanpatha Householder Yogis.” She was awarded a College of Arts and Sciences Travel Scholarship for this paper presentation.

Undergraduate news

Our undergraduates have been very busy this academic year. In September, they met for the annual Undergraduate Religious Studies Association Welcome Back Party, where faculty and students mingled and played the game “Two Truths and a Lie.” The party concluded with the first official URSA meeting of the year.

Other events in the fall included several movie nights with faculty-led discussions (David Brakke discussed *Godspell*, Bert



Department of Religious Studies faculty and students mingle at the Undergraduate Religious Studies Association's annual Welcome Back Party in September 2005.

Harrill talked about *God and Politics* — *The Battle for the Bible*, and Lisa Sideris discussed *What the Bleep Do We Know?*; a lunch with Steve Weitzman to discuss his new book; and a lunch with Lisa Sideris to get to know her and her research interests. Aaron Stalnaker hosted a discussion about a *New York Times* article, and, in November, senior Benjamin Huffman led the first in

what will hopefully be a series of student lectures with a talk on “Religious Themes in Comic Books.”

The department is proud to announce the fall 2005 Phi Beta Kappa inductees: **Kelsey Lenox**, who is majoring in political science, religious studies, and philosophy; and **Andrea Townley**, who is a religious studies and psychology double major.

Faculty news

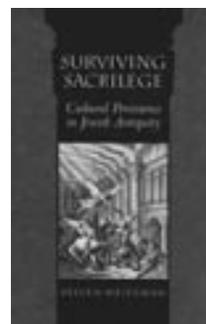
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Ecology, edited by Roger Gottlieb. Another is an essay for a collection of essays devoted to the work of environmental philosopher Holmes Rolston, edited by Christopher Preston. Another is for a volume called *Faith in America*; she contributed the chapter on “Religion and Environmentalism in America.” And finally, she will have an essay on Darwinism and environmentalism in a critical primer on environmental stewardship, edited by R.J. Berry. Sideris is also editing an interdisciplinary collection of essays on the life and work of Rachel Carson, titled *On Nature's Terms*, which is forthcoming from University of Virginia Press. She gave a paper at the AAR on the similarities between some forms of ecotheology and intelligent design creationism.

Aaron Stalnaker has finished rewriting his book manuscript, titled *Overcoming Our Evil: Human Nature and Spiritual Exercises in Xunzi and Augustine*. It is now in production at Georgetown University Press

and will come out in late spring. Stalnaker has been awarded a Poynter Center Faculty Fellowship, and he is currently participating in the associated interdisciplinary seminar on “Nature in the Scientific and Moral Imagination” that meets periodically during the current academic year. He gave a talk on “Confucian Democracy and the Virtue of Deference” in December 2005 at the American Philosophical Association annual meeting and will give an invited talk in April as part of a symposium at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University on the making of religious worlds and their associated ethical subjectivities.

Steve Weitzman, Irving M. Glazer Chair of Jewish Studies, continues as director of the Borns Jewish Studies Program. 2005 saw the publication of two books: *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) and *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, co-edited with David Brakke and Michael Satlow (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), in the latter of which he



has an essay titled “Sensory Reform in the Book of Deuteronomy.” Weitzman is spending the spring semester in Jerusalem, where he is a fellow of the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and a visiting scholar at

the Hebrew University's Orion Center, which is devoted to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Read more about our
faculty online at
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~relstud

Alumni Notebook

1960s

Rev. **Charles Robertson**, BA'64, MA'81, Cert'84, pastor of Wilshire Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles and president of the Wilshire Center Interfaith Council, was one of 45 "children of Abraham" — 15 Jews, 15 Christians, and 15 Muslims — on an interfaith pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Feb. 10–21, 2005, sponsored by the council. Robertson reports, "The most spiritually significant aspect of the experience was to worship together in the traditions and places of worship of all three faiths, rather than in interfaith services where accommodations are made to one another's beliefs, while maintaining the integrity of one's own faith. Pilgrims were bonded in their oneness as brothers and sisters in Abraham and affirmed their respective faiths."

1970s

Peter H. Glade, BA'73, of the law firm of Markowitz Herbold Glade & Mehlhaf, Portland, Ore., has become a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

Michael Antonio Canganelli, BA'74, writes that he retired from his position as public service administrator with the Illinois Department of Employment Security in order to work full time on his business as a district leader with Primerica Financial Services.

Deborah A. Kornblau, BA'74, MLS'80, recently completed an intensive three-year teacher-training program at the Urbana (Ill.) Center for the Alexander Technique and currently has a private teaching practice in Urbana.

1980s

Daniel J. Boucher, BA'86, MA'89, was recently tenured and promoted to associate professor in the Asian studies department at Cornell University. He is working on a book manuscript that he will soon submit to the University of Hawaii Press, titled *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahayana: A Study and Translation of the Restrapala-paripriccha-sutra*.

Adam L. Brice, BA'88, of Conshohocken, Pa., received a master of theology degree from Westminster Theological Seminary in May 2005.

2000s

Three religious studies alumni who were chosen for Teach For America after graduation continue their work in education: **Alison Brown**, BA'02, was recently nomi-

nated Teacher of the Year in her school district in Louisville, Ky. **Diego Merino**, BA/BM'02, has been appointed dean of school culture at the Village Academy in East Harlem, N.Y., a charter school. **Matt Scott**, BA'02, is director of operations at the Village Academy in East Harlem, N.Y.

Sheila B. Lalwani, BAJ'02, was recently selected as a fellow through the Asia Foundation. Through this fellowship, she was able to travel to Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia to study Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, respectively. Lalwani says, "Having a religious studies degree under my belt has been very fruitful for me. I currently write a lot about religion for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* as a reporter, and I recently received the Lilly

Scholarship to continue studies in religion. I also am studying Arabic. As undergraduates contemplate the practical uses of the major, I can attest to its value in my life as a professional." *Look for a profile of Sheila Lalwani in the summer newsletter!*

David Snipes, BA'02, is teaching sociology and psychology at Korea Kent Foreign School in Seoul, South Korea. KKFS is an international school (K–12) with around 300 students from more than 30 different nations. Snipes is teaching grades 11 and 12. He was also admitted to the IU School of Education for a master's degree in secondary education, but he is forgoing graduate school for the near future to further his teaching career at KKFS.

ANNOUNCING

IUAlumniCareers.com



The Indiana University Alumni Association's new online career services center, **IUAlumniCareers.com**, is officially open! This Web site provides online career and mentoring services for IU alumni. Register at **IUAlumniCareers.com** to search for jobs posted by employers, post your résumé for review by employers, or search for an alumni mentor for career advice.

IU alumni are invited to register as mentors to give career advice to their fellow alumni. As a mentor, you may choose how often and in what manner you wish to be contacted, and you may opt out of the mentor program at any time.

Employers are invited to register to post job openings, at no charge.

Only IUAA members may search for jobs and mentors, so activate your membership today!

To join the IUAA or to renew your membership, contact the IUAA membership department at iuaamemb@indiana.edu or (800) 824-3044.



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Ethics class at IU changes scope of alumna's career

Elizabeth Agnew has had a diverse teaching career that began even before she came to IU to pursue graduate studies in 1986. After earning a BA from Brown University, she taught history at a private high school in Virginia for two years, and then came to Bloomington with plans to spend a year here before going to UVA for graduate school.

During that interim year, Agnew took an ethics course with Richard Miller, rekindling her interest in questions of virtue, selfhood, and “doing good” that she first explored in religious studies courses at Brown. She elected to stay at IU instead of going to UVA. She received an MA in religious studies in 1988 and then went on to the PhD program.

After having completed her coursework and exams, Agnew changed course a bit and decided to get a teaching certificate in social studies. She taught public high school for a year and then returned to complete her PhD, which she did in 1999 with the assistance of Greenburg Albee and AAUW dissertation fellowships.

Agnew appreciates the opportunity she had to do highly interdisciplinary work



Elizabeth Agnew

at IU while working closely with faculty in both the history and religious studies departments. In particular, she is appreciative of her work with Richard Miller, David Smith, and Stephen Stein, and of the guidance and support she received from David Smith and Larry Friedman (in history), who co-chaired her dissertation committee. Her revised dissertation, published by University of Illinois Press in 2004 under the title *From Charity to Social Work: Mary E. Richmond and the Creation of an American Profession*, was named an Outstanding Academic Title by Choice, a publication of the Association of College Research Libraries. Of the timeliness of this topic Agnew says, “This research examines the development of ideas about and practices of philanthropy in late-19th- and early-20th-century America, and through the work of charity organization leader Mary Richmond traces debates that have re-emerged in contemporary welfare practices. Among these are debates about religious norms and social scientific methods, private charity and government initiative, character development and systemic reform, and volunteerism and professionalism.”

After completing her graduate work, Agnew was hired at Ball State University to teach for their extended education program, which led her to an assignment that has strongly influenced her life and scholarship since that time: she taught introductory religious studies and ethics courses for almost two years in the medium- and maximum-security prisons in Pendleton, Ind. There she taught a range of students, from the most remedial to an outstand-

ing student who, after his release, received a Governor’s Fellowship to finish his BA and is now applying for PhD programs in philosophy. One thing the students had in common was a strong commitment to taking advantage of the educational program in the prisons. Research shows that education for inmates lowers the rate of recidivism, and Agnew describes her time teaching prisoners as an “eye-opening” and “very humane” experience. She now pays close attention to alternative approaches to rehabilitating prisoners. In particular, she has done research on religious and secular not-for-profit initiatives billed as “freedom” programs, while also exploring how religious norms of the West have shaped our understanding of punishment and imprisonment. In 2004, she went to India to present the paper “Freedom in Imprisonment: A Comparative Perspective,” which drew on her prison teaching experience and subsequent research.

In 2003, Agnew was hired for a tenure-track position in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Ball State University. As the religious studies program grows (they currently have 47 active majors and 62 minors), Agnew hopes to draw on IU’s program as a model for revising their undergraduate curriculum. She teaches courses such as Religions and American Culture; Theory and Method in the Study of Religion; and Women, Gender, and Religion. She is working on developing courses on religion and ethics in an American context and on religion, philanthropy, and justice. Now that she is a full-time assistant professor, Agnew reflects on the value of observing her professors teaching undergraduates during the time that she served as an assistant instructor for various IU faculty members. She also appreciates the range of people with whom she was able to study during her years at IU.

Currently, in addition to her teaching duties, Agnew is working on an article titled “Democracy, Charity, and Needs Discourse in American Culture,” courtesy of a New Faculty Grant from Ball State. She says, “Writers ranging from Jane Addams to Michael Ignatieff and Martha Nussbaum draw attention to a language of needs and capabilities as distinct from a language of rights. I am exploring how this attention can foster virtues of compassion and respect and provide an alternate approach to philanthropy and development.”

Religious Studies

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