The Journal of Higher Education

ACADEMIC MATTERS

La Revue d'enseignement supérieur

DECEMBER/DÉCEMBRE 2007

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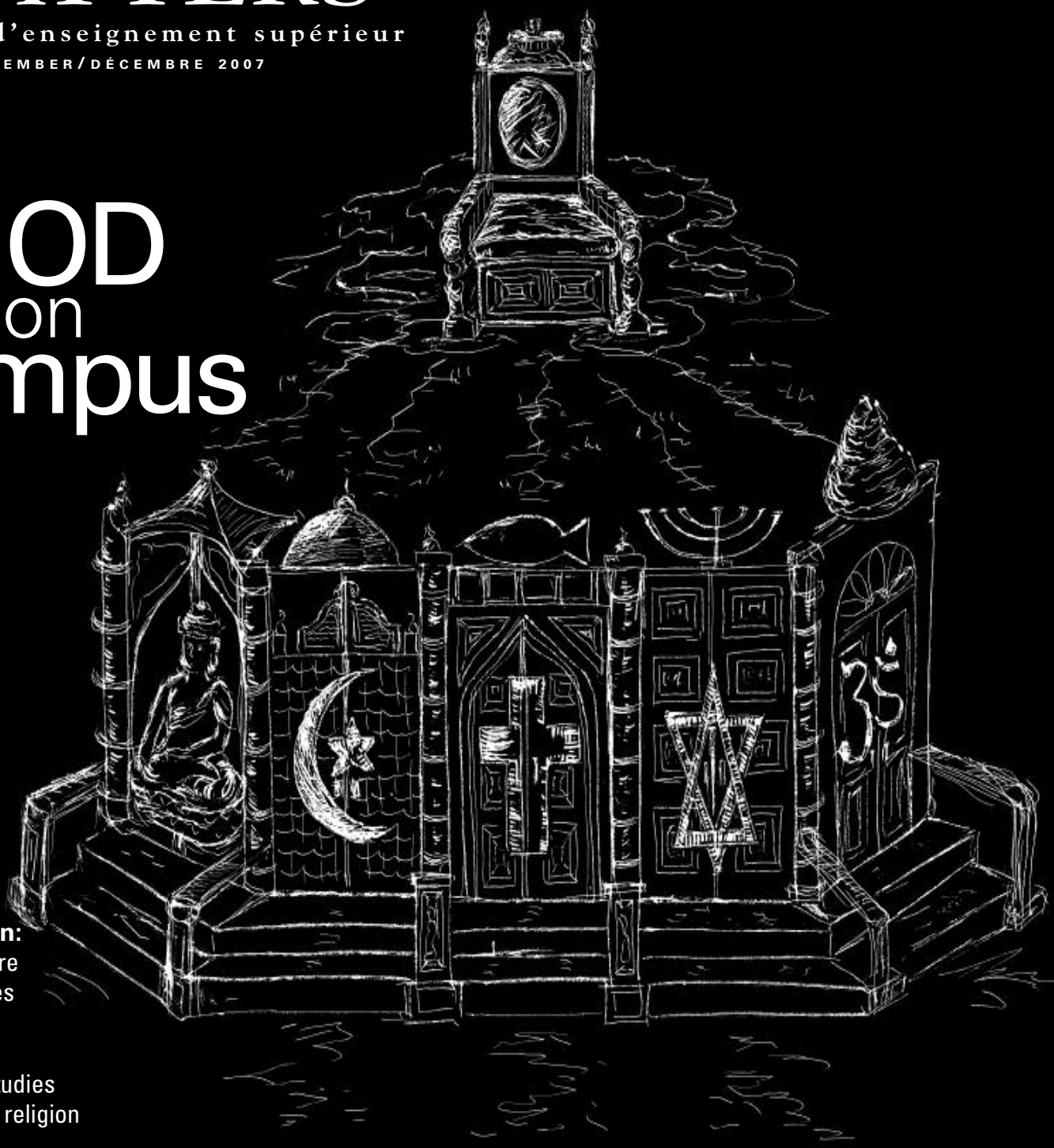

Tariq Ramadan: Plotting the future of Islamic studies

C.T. McIntire: How religious studies misunderstands religion

Martin Lockshin: Jewish studies, Israel and anti-Semitism on Canadian campuses

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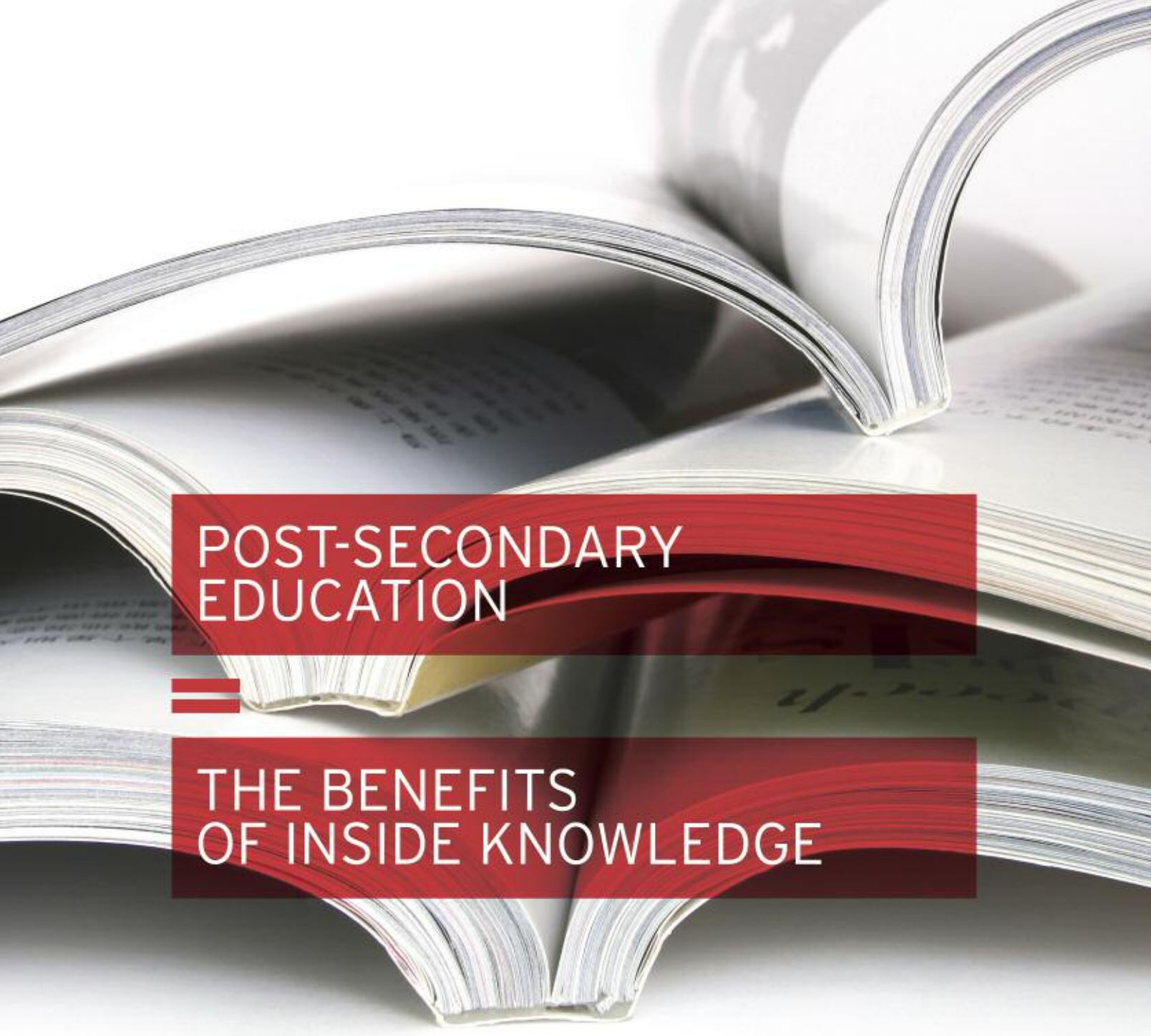

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Academic Matters is published four times a year by OCUFA, and is received by 24,000 professors, academic librarians and others interested in higher education issues across Canada. The journal explores issues of relevance to higher education in Ontario, other provinces in Canada, and globally. It is intended to be a forum for thoughtful and thought- provoking, original and engaging discussion of current trends in post secondary education and consideration of academe's future direction.

Readers are encouraged to contribute their views, ideas and talents. Letters to the editor (maximum 250 words) are welcome and may be edited for length. To provide an article or artwork for *Academic Matters*, please send your query to Editor-in-Chief Mark Rosenfeld at mrosenfeld@ocufa.on.ca.

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Dear Editor:

I'm sure Steve Penfold thinks his "Branding the university: is that where we're @?" (*Academic Matters*, October 2007) is funny, but he really ought to be more careful when handling fire: there are many administrators at the University of Ottawa who might mistakenly see his article as a clever new plan to promote the university. All the more so since they have already started down the path that Penfold outlines: the university has changed its name from "The University of Ottawa" to "uOttawa", which it took from the university's e-mail address (@uOttawa.ca). This "high tech brand" is now plastered everywhere one looks on campus and off (such as Scotia Bank Place), even in 10-foot-high brushed aluminum letters at the top of various sides of the newly built social sciences building. This plan goes along nicely with the new student internet cafe that was set up this year in what had been the main campus library. Computer terminals and lounge areas with fake fireplaces now occupy areas that used be filled with books (which have been sent off campus to a depot). A newly installed Second Cup on the other side of what used to be the reference section provides beverages and food that are consumed throughout the ex-library. Inno-U indeed!

R. W. Burgess
Professor, Classics and Religious Studies
University of Ottawa

Dear Editor:

I was very pleased to find Toni Samek's article "Librarians and 'information justice' " (*Academic Matters*, October 2007).The challenges to librarians' academic freedoms outlined by Samek would also apply to archivists.

Canadian universities employ archivists and records managers who are also on the front-lines of information management, whose responsibilities include access to information and privacy protection legislation administration, electronic records access and preservation, and copyright administration. Because we are a smaller profession, archivists' rights and critical contributions can be overlooked. At the University of Victoria, archivists are included in the framework agreement, within the definition of "librarian."

Lara Wilson
University Archivist
University of Victoria

Dear Editor:

The article by Henry Giroux on "Universities in the shadow of the national security state" (*Academic Matters*, October 2007) puts forward some arguments that are new and some that are true. The problem is, what is said that is true isn't new, and what is new isn't true. It is not new that universities engage in Security and Defence studies. It is not true that governments and "the military-industrial complex" subvert academic freedom and scholarly morality by dint of Security and Defence Studies.

Surely, it behooves OCUFA and readers to remember that many of our professorial colleagues and students in Ontario universities are members of Canada's Security and Defence Forum, an arms-length support mechanism sponsored by the Department of National Defence. The Security and Defence Forum has contributed invaluably to building capacity in teaching, research, and outreach on security and defence studies within Canada and globally.

Security and Defence Studies represent a legitimate and accepted area of scholarly discourse. Giroux may subscribe to alternative perspectives that prefer appeasement to defence. Nevertheless, many others in academe believe that is it indeed of value to study the ways democratic societies protect and defend themselves against avowed adversaries.

Martin Rudner
Professor Emeritus and Distinguished Research Professor
Carleton University

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Plotting the Future of Islamic Studies

Teaching and research in the current political climate

Oxford University's Tariq Ramadan calls for a more serious and less ideological approach to university Islamic studies in the West

Interest in Islamic Studies has grown rapidly in recent years, but not always for the best of reasons. The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed an upsurge of similar disciplines at a time when the colonial powers (specifically Great Britain and France) were attempting to understand the religious references and practical motivations of their colonized subjects. Research then was oriented toward a specific need: to determine the values and practices of the newly colonized. Acquiring knowledge of "the other" (a rare pursuit in any event) was a lesser consideration. The colonial powers' need to gain full mastery of the tools that would optimize colonial management, that would advance the "civilizing mission," and that would allow them to derive maximum advantage from the knowledge they acquired— directly from certain scholars (*ulamâ*)—with the intention of using religion and religious dignitaries to legitimize their power, were the dominant concerns. Orientalist studies unencumbered by political considerations were the exception. What flourished for decades was a self-interested study of and research into the question of Islam. From a political perspective, such a trend was as understandable as it was natural.


Photo by Mischa Bartkow

Interest in Islamic Studies has grown rapidly in recent years, but not always for the best of reasons.

Today, "Islamic Studies" seem equally driven by self-interest. But now, such studies are dealing with data that is much more concrete and that interact in complex and far-reaching ways. Western societies are now experiencing three distinct phenomena that have drawn their attention to and expanded research about Islam: the increased visibility of new generations of western Muslims; an ongoing migratory flow that seems unlikely to slow and more likely to accelerate; and finally, terrorism, which looms as a threat to both the western and the Islamic world. To these domestic factors should be added the realities of international politics; namely, the central question of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the case of Iran, the question of Turkish membership in the European Union, and the pervasively binary way in which the questions of the clash (and possible alliance) of civilizations are framed. In each of these instances, Islamic Studies are directly or indirectly involved as part of an attempt to understand and to prevent, to protect ourselves, to dominate, and even to fight should the adversary be violent Islamism. As a consequence, sociologists, political scientists, and terrorism experts churn out a mind-numbing volume of research on Islam, on Muslims, on identity, immigration, Islamism, radicalization, violence, terrorism, and so on. Some of their work may be commissioned by governmental agencies and some by major corporations. Such subjects are seen as being of immediate concern and receive multi-million dollar funding. Today, like yesterday, research is fueled by self-interest.

The first difficulty to arise from this carefully orchestrated infatuation with Islamic Studies (and which may well be the major obstacle to be overcome) is the fact that it reduces several centuries of the Islamic legal heritage (*fiqh*), studies of the creed (*'aqîda*), philosophical progress (*kalam*), mystical thought (*sûfi*), and social and political inquiry (*siyâsa shar'iyya*) to elementary, contemporary surveys of political ideologies, migrations, and social movements. Over the last 30 years, new specialists in Islam have emerged. They are primarily sociologists or

political scientists, who have been joined in the last six years by terrorism experts. The study of religious thought proper (of theology, of its premises, its internal complexities and its development) has been relegated to a subsidiary position, if it is not totally absent. Beyond the ongoing and intense concern generated by the conflict in Iraq, we see little interest in the richness of the Sunni and Sh'ia traditions, their millennia-long relationship, and their respective theological and juridical realms.

Surprisingly, Islamic Studies appear to have abandoned the academic chairs that ought to have been theirs by right, where the emphasis was on the study of theology, philosophy, and the history of thought. It is considered proper today to quote the rationalist philosopher Averroes to illustrate to what an extent "something" or "someone" in Islam can be identified as approaching western philosophy. The omnipresence of Averroes in the academic discourse of political correctness stands also as a negative indicator of a lack of knowledge and recognition of Islam's great theologians and thinkers down through the centuries. Universities in the West must seek the kind of knowledge of other civilizations and cultures — particularly that of Islam (though we could also make the same argument with regard to India and China) — that is driven neither by ideological agendas nor collective fears. The decision to be taken is a political one, a challenge that cannot be avoided.

If we are to study the scientific categories that bear on the teaching of Islamic thought, its heritage, and its contemporary expression, we must adopt a holistic approach that would establish, as a prerequisite, those fields of knowledge to be given immediate priority. Obsession with the struggle against "radicalization and terrorism" paints a picture of contemporary Islamic Studies as an academic territory besieged by dangerously utilitarian political considerations. But, if we are to be serious about respecting the diversity of civilizations, about the necessity of dialogue between them, and about promoting common values, we must, on an urgent basis, rethink the content of our curricula. The study of religion proper involves theology and theological scholars (*ulamâ*), the teaching of law and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and the study of legal scholars (*fuqahâ'*) alongside an historical and critical approach to Islamic history and thought (with its philosophers and its trends), but all such disciplines are cruelly lacking today.

No less important is the question of the professors and instructors themselves: while it is generally accepted that Jews, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists (even though they may be practising believers) can approach their field of study in an objective manner, everything seems to indicate that the same is not possible for Muslim faculty members, whose objectivity is cast into doubt (especially if they are practising Muslims), or who may be implicitly invited to defend theses perceived in the West as "pro-western." Even an informal, statistical survey of the profile of professorial staff in Islamic Studies in western societies would tend to confirm the trend — as reflected in hiring. Under the guise of objectivity (a fundamental requirement in the academic field that can brook no compromise), an essentially "exogenous" form of teaching has been established. If the intention is to understand the Islamic referential universe both "objectively" and "from within," such a situation becomes of necessity problematic.

The third challenge is to establish a distance between the stress generated by current affairs, and the objective study of contemporary Islamic thought. Violence, terrorism, and the repeated insistence that "Islamic authorities" denounce terrorism often prevent us from realizing that we are dealing with a world caught up in intellectual ferment, a world that, from Morocco to Indonesia, from the United States to Australia by way of Europe and Turkey, is creating a body of fresh, compelling, audacious critical thought, which is not merely the

Photo by Mischa Bartkow

work of those thinkers known to and recognized by the West. Alongside the highly publicized statements about modernity, rationalism, women, the *sharî'a*, and violence by certain public figures, there is a deep-down, deliberate process of evolution underway in every Islamic society in the world. Far from rushing to conclusions, far from populist, ideological speech, the academic world must take this process seriously, study it, and present its outlines and its implications. A significant part of the Islamic Studies curriculum must be devoted to serious study of the intellectual production of its most prominent representatives (which implies mastery of Arabic, Urdu, and other languages) and of the relations and tensions between generations (by historically contextualizing data). Only in the light of such knowledge do the comparative theological and sociological approaches begin to make sense. Only then can serious correspondences be established, as opposed to the dangerous and simplistic notion that Islam is still in its medieval period (for Muslims, this argument goes, the year is only 1428); that it must evolve and experience its own *aggiornamento* before it can catch up with the West and with modernity. But when this kind of academic stricture is laid down as a prerequisite, the study of a religion or of a civilization is no longer academic or objective. Instead, it feeds into ideologies, maintains domination, and gives aid and comfort to arrogance.

In everyday speech and within academia, a distinction must be drawn between Islam and Muslims on the one hand, and political Islam, Islamism, and Islamists on the other. The distinction is essential if contemporary Islamic Studies are to progress in any meaningful way. Assuming the distinction has been made, there must still be a serious, critical reappraisal of the instruction being offered in many of our universities. Historical depth (the direct result of the break with the classical heritage, as noted above) is currently neglected; it is as though "political Islam" had sprung upon the world in the second half of the 20th century. At best, those thinkers of the classical period quoted by contemporary Islamists are identified without even taking the time to study what exactly those thinkers said (and not what their contemporary interpreters would have them say). So it is that certain violent groups are lent an *a posteriori* interpretative authority that is based on nothing more than *a priori* negligence (or ignorance). Perhaps the outstanding example of this treatment is Ibn Taymiyya, who is considered the original extremist thinker. Such reductionism is not merely reprehensible; it also reveals how authority and perspective can be shifted and reassigned. The speech and actions of today's violent Islamists are the windows through which the Islamic heritage and Islamic scholars are re-read and evaluated. Such an approach is neither serious nor academic, yet it is a recurring figure in research studies.

We must also insist on a historical perspective on the variants of political Islam (from movements reminiscent of liberation theology to violent and literalist movements, by way of legalist or pro-democracy movements, not at all unlike trends in Christianity and Judaism); and on the internal development of these movements (in Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey, Indonesia, for example).

Contemporary Islamic Studies faces the major challenge of reconciling students who are drawn to the field with a complex, multi-layered, and multi-dimensional world. Knowledge of languages, cultures, memories, and histories — of social dynamics and evolution — are the essential parameters for the study of "the other" as they actually are, and not simply as people who make up an objective, demographic, cultural, or political threat. This is what responsible citizens need; it is what the universities must focus on in order to provide them with the tools of knowledge and skill necessary to bring about social, economic, media and political action in the future.

The challenges are many. There are indications that things are changing and moving forward, owing to two concomitant phenomena: more and more western Muslims are entering Islamic Studies, bringing with them their knowledge and their sensibilities—from within—while, at the same time, professors and instructors have begun to question the old paradigms much more insistently, to multiply the angles of approach in order to objectify "Islam," and to transform it into a more coherent, more complete and, ultimately, more academic discipline. But we are still far from a satisfactory solution; the obstacles are many and complex. The question is both politicized and political. The investment of public and private funds in research is driven by agendas that are not always exclusively "academic," which explains the strongly ideological and utilitarian approaches favoured today. But the greatest obstacle—which must be hurdled before anything else can take place—may well be that of explaining to politicians and to donors that long-term investment in serious Islamic Studies programs — in a complete curriculum ranging from theology to philosophy by way of the political and social sciences — in close connection with contemporary internal dynamics is, in fact, imperative to protect the long-term interests of our democracies. Short-term political calculation is as dangerous a game in a university setting as it is anywhere else. Only investment in basic research, coupled with full respect for scientific principles and objectivity, will enable students to deal with the challenges of globalization in the pluralistic societies of tomorrow. Islamic Studies, precisely for the reasons I have sketched out above, and particularly in the current political context, must be approached with full seriousness. It is incumbent upon politicians, university administrators, professors and students to have the courage to say as much and to make a firm commitment to reevaluate in critical and constructive fashion what our institutions offer us today. AM

Contemporary Islamic Studies face the major challenge of reconciling students who are drawn to the field with a complex, multi-layered, and multi-dimensional world.

Tariq Ramadan is a professor at Oxford University/Erasmus University

How Religious Studies Misunderstands Religion

The University of Toronto's C.T. McIntire says religious studies can offer leadership for the construction of new templates to replace the modernist, scientific model in the university.

Departments of religious studies, whose mandate is to provide for teaching and scholarship that seeks to understand religion, have provided significant leadership since their origins in the late 1960s and 1970s in devising new approaches to learning and creating new academic structures within the universities they inhabit. Their impact has helped change the academic make-up and intellectual quality of their universities. Their means has been, in advance of others, to design, practise, and advocate multidisciplinary approaches to their subject, collaborative programs across departments, and genuinely global studies.

A SURPRISING GLITCH

These same departments have failed, however, to give leadership in at least one highly significant area, the search for a new template for academic study that can replace the dominant, but disintegrating, modernist scientific template. Departments of religious studies actually embraced this template, characterized as secularist, naturalist, rationalist, objectivist, and neutralist, at the very moment when scholars in other departments were becoming aware of the model's fundamental defects.

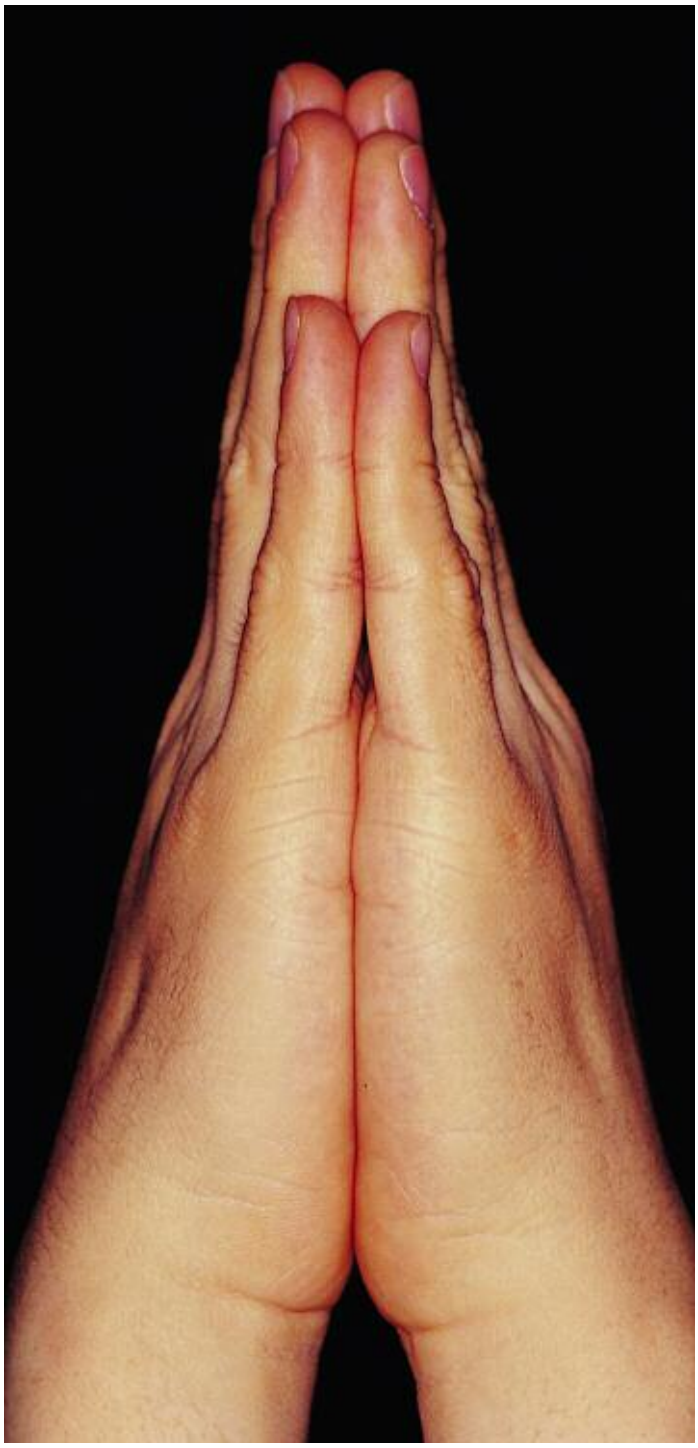
This embrace took the form of a culture within departments of religious studies that de facto privileged the modernist tem-

plate as the dominant model and favoured behaviour and ideas among scholars and students consistent with it. Individual scholars and students did deviate from the model, but the culture effectively overrode them, and those who strongly favoured the model consistently carried the day.

Among the consequences of this embrace has been the continuing struggle within departments of religious studies to grasp the very phenomenon they were brought into the world to study. They have tended to neglect and, in many cases, actually to combat what we may call the religiousness of the religions by which people orient their lives to what they take to be basic and ultimate. By so doing, the departments often misrepresent the religions of the world. These departments face the task of figuring out how this oddity came about and how they might overcome this surprising glitch.

HOW IT HAPPENED

When departments of religious studies emerged all over North America in the late 1960s and the 1970s, their antecedents were departments of religion, departments of theology, or mixed-subject departments that, among others, offered courses in religious knowledge, biblical studies, theology, ethics, and religious philosophy. In both Canada and the United States, the religious impulses behind such courses and departments derived from Christianity. Indeed, the long history of higher education in both countries is tied to Christianity. In Ontario, for instance, nearly all of the older universities, those dating from well before the 1960s, have histories as Christian institutions. Other universities, derived from older technical and agricultural predecessors, arguably have Christian roots. The big new universities created in the years around 1960 and thereafter lack Christian foundation, but several have Christian colleges, universities, and theological schools affiliated or federated with them.



Departments of religious studies have tended to neglect and, in many cases, to combat the religiousness of religion by which people orient their lives to what they take to be basic and ultimate

The project to create the field called religious studies, sometimes named study of religion, and to establish departments of religious studies drew upon earlier studies known as Religionsgeschichte, comparative religion, and history of religions. The project involved several important moves. One was to differentiate and distance the new field from theology and theological study. This often took the form of disadvantaging Christianity and sometimes evidenced something like the fear of being tainted by theology. Another was to add to the curriculum the study of other religions of the world where these were not previously taught, notably Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Chinese religions, aboriginal religions, among others. A third was to go beyond philosophical, historical, textual, philological, and literary methods common in the humanities to embrace sociology, anthropology, ethnography, and psychology as methods for the study of religion. A fourth was to adopt in practice the modernist scientific template for the study of religion, embedded within a departmental culture that reinforced it.

The first three of these moves puts religious studies well ahead of virtually every other department in the university. The

study of religion appears obviously ready-made for the use of multidisciplinary methods, for trans-departmental collaboration, and for the practice of a genuinely world consciousness and world study. In the early twenty-first century, one university after another loudly trumpets these features as primary marks of learning and does so as if this is a new discovery. When the noise settles down, departments of religious studies manage to receive much credit as pioneers in such things.

It is the fourth move that produces the problem. As departments of religious studies emerged and abandoned theological approaches, they attached themselves to the modernist scientific template with the heightened enthusiasm of the new convert. At the very same time, however, the rising tide of criticism against that modernist scientific template in other fields foretold the template's demise. Religious studies appeared out of date when it started.

Religious studies accomplished this feat in a two-step process that put in position certain assumptions. The first step assumes a dichotomy well-known in Europe and North America. The dichotomy divides the world into two parts signaled by a pair of terms commonly deployed in our language: "secular and religious." The terms derive from Latin Christian usage in Europe during a period when both terms carried Christian religious meanings. But over time, affected by certain secularist impulses issuing from aspects of the European Enlightenment, the terms changed meaning. The terms transmuted into a post-Christian dichotomy that translates as "not-religious and religious." This paramount dichotomy does not stand alone. It comes associated with a string of other pairs whose first terms align with "secular," in the sense of not-religious, and whose second terms align with "religious. Among the important pairs mimicking "secular and religious" are: natural and supernatural, material and spiritual, profane and sacred, reason and faith, rational and emotional, objective and subjective, scientific and theological, public and private, society and personal, state and church, masculine and feminine, modern and medieval.

The consequences of adopting the dichotomy are powerful. Religious studies as a field of study self-identifies with the first set of terms and then deletes the second set, with all its contents. That leaves the first set. Exceptions among individual scholars notwithstanding, religious studies as a culture and field of study emerges free to act as a secular, naturalist, rationalist, objective, religiously neutral, scientific operation. The university itself gets depicted as a first-set creature that legitimizes religious studies as a suitable first-set resident. Concomitantly, the practice of religion inside the university community gets rendered as a problem.

By behaving as a first-set item, religious studies plays a trick on itself. The effect is either to privilege the tendency to reduce religions to something like merely societal, cultural, economic, psychological, social-controlling, or power-driven phenomena — or to force the removal of religions to the stratosphere as other-worldly phenomena concerned with transcendent spirits, gods, and heroes. Either way, religious studies fails to see religion as a dimension of human existence and the religions as ways of life for the people who live them. In so far as this happens, religious studies neglects or distorts the religiousness of the religions as practiced and witnessed by the people studied.

Operating in accordance with first-set assumptions served for a while as potent support for the secularization thesis; that is, the judgment that religion was inconsistent with the modern world, and the expectation that religion was bound to disappear or withdraw to an irrelevant private sector. Ironically, the secularization thesis could also serve as an argument for the disappearance of religious studies, except as a study of historical throw-backs and lost worlds, such as Indus Valley culture, medieval Europe, and the Norse in Newfoundland.

The second step assumes self-imposed constraints on the scholars and students of religion. The culture and practice of religious studies as a field, in keeping with its origins, presuppose the secular modernist conceit: scholars in religious studies are

neutral and blank, and, with appropriate academic criticism, they produce objective results independent of their personhood, that is, detached from their gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, wealth, relationship with power, politics, morality, and above all their religion. Religious studies as a culture inclines professors and students alike to keep their religious, political, and moral identity private, out of the classroom and out of their scholarship. Professors remain on guard against letting their students know whether they practice or believe a religion, and students get marked down if they discuss their own religious practice and belief in their papers or in class. Professors and advanced students learn not to let slip whether they are for religion as something potentially worthwhile in the world, or for any particular religion. High on the list of things colleagues in religious studies do not talk about with each other or in public is their own religion and religious concerns. The norm is detachment from religion and distance from one's own and other people's religion. The rule is to speak in the third person about religion as if it were an object out there, removed from the lives of professors and students. The idea is the disappearance of the person of the scholar, and the production of universally valid and universally accepted scholarship about religion, representing simply the way it is, subject only to academic criticism and refinement. The effect, once again, is to mistake or miss seeing the religiousness of religion as people shape their ways of life in relation to what they regard as basic and ultimate.

Religious studies incline professors and students to keep their religious, political and moral identity private. Professors remain on guard against letting the students know whether they practice or believe a religion.

THE CHALLENGES

Three monumental happenings challenge these two-step assumptions of religious studies as originally constructed. First is the disintegration of the modernist scientific model in many fields, owing to the weight of its own failures and in confrontation with fundamental criticism from many sources. The sources include sustained work over many years of post-modern, post-colonial, feminist, black, aboriginal, semiotic, literary, religious, and other criticisms. All of these challenge the template and the dichotomies on which the template rests. Many scholars of religious studies share and promote these criticisms. The critics unmask the scholars and scholarship operating according to the modernist scientific model as anything but neutral and blank. The modernist scientific approach in religious studies leaves out too much and misrepresents too much to sustain confidence. It becomes painfully evident that reliance on the dichotomy "secular and religious" and the accompanying template fundamentally mistakes the character of the religions themselves.

Second is the role of religions in world events. The religions of the world become more important by the day, and the impact of the religions touches virtually every aspect of life across the globe. The renewals of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, aboriginal religion, and East Asian religions, as well as swells in the expression of what might be called secular religions, along with the mounting global spread of Christianity in Africa, South Asia, China, the former Soviet Union, Latin America, urban North America, and elsewhere—all these testify to the vitality of religions in the lives of people throughout the world. Religion is not disappearing or retreating to the closet. Universal secularization is not happening.

Third is the migration of peoples crisscrossing the globe in all directions, carrying their religions with them. Just about every country feels the stretching effect of new immigrants, religious diasporas, and new religious demography. For example, according to Statistics Canada, the number of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs has risen significantly since the 1960s, yielding a critical mass of people in Canada for each of these world religions. At the same time, the number of Christians entering Canada has remained significant as well. Indeed, the number of Christians bringing their religion to Canada since the 1960s exceeds the newcomers of all the other religions put together.

Many children of recent immigrants and children of the children of earlier immigrants, coming from families where religion matters, populate the religious studies classrooms of the universities of Canada. They are joined by children of still earlier heritages in Canada, who experience a renewal of religious concerns. Enrolments in religious studies are rising faster than those in many neighbouring departments. These students have no interest in keeping their religion out of the religious studies classroom. The dichotomy "secular and religious" misses the mark of understanding the place of religion in their lives and their families' lives. They chose to study religion precisely because religion belongs to their lives. Many find it incomprehensible that religious studies should impede them from connecting their study of religion with their experience of religion.

WHAT TO DO DIFFERENTLY

The purpose of religious studies in the university needs no change. The goal remains of understanding religion, appropriately, fairly, and critically, and becomes increasingly more urgent by the day. Removing impediments to pursuing the goal, however, will improve religious studies.

The starting place is to let go of the dichotomy "secular and religious" and the lengthy string of attendant dichotomies. It will not be easy, but doing so will enable scholars and students more readily to see religion as a dimension of human life and religions as ways of life. Next is to let go of the modernist template that still dominates the culture and field of religious studies. That too will not be easy, but doing so will allow professors and students more readily to grasp their own roles in the construction of knowledge of religion and to clarify how their own lived relationship with religion relates to their study of religion.

Religious studies classrooms can begin to open their doors to the religions as lived by the students who populate them. Religious studies professors can learn to loosen up. Many have already. Some other departments and programs, such as philosophy, psychology, literature, and international relations, already bring the lived experience of their students into the classroom, and do not fear doing so. Professors can free themselves to name where they are coming from in religion, and students can do the same. Mutual self-disclosure and mutual respect for religious difference changes the dynamic in the classroom. The conversation would favour deeper communication and academic understanding, and remarks derogatory of religion and religious people would disappear. Classes might discuss what makes for good religion and what makes for harmful religion, reflect on how to encourage the worthy and inhibit the destructive, consider constructive options within Islam or Christianity or Buddhism, explore improving relations among religions, examine ways the religious can contribute to the common life, and think about how to end discrimination against religion and those practicing religion, starting inside the university. They can encourage students to integrate their classroom lives with their out-of-classroom lives and support multiple modes of learning for understanding religion. Students and professors can foster communication between religious studies and the large number of religious student clubs on campus. They can connect with nearby churches, mandirs, mosques, synagogues, and gurdwaras, not as specimens, but as communities of people to engage.

New theories of religion and the study of religion can help, theories that start by dismissing the dichotomy of "secular and religious." New theories can then consider the role of religion amid the diversity of life and how it is that people shape their lives as expressions of what they count as fundamental and ultimate. Likewise, religious studies can begin to offer leadership on the construction of new templates for academic study to replace the modernist scientific template in the university. Scholars and students alike can join the potentially reinvigorating project of making what amounts to a fresh start in fulfilling the mandate to understand religion.

Bono of U2 fame once remarked, "I often wonder if religion is the enemy of God. It's almost like religion is what happens when the Spirit has left the building." A playful paraphrase might be, "I often wonder if religious studies is the enemy of religion. It's almost like the secular academic study of religion is what happens when the Spirit has left the university." Discovering the religiousness of religion in religious studies might help bring the Spirit back. AM

C. T. McIntire is a professor of history and religion at the University of Toronto and was the graduate director of the university's Centre for the Study of Religion from 1992 to 2003.

Theology and religious studies in the academy:

Photo by Mischa Bartkow

Co-existing paradigms and contested categories

The University of Toronto's Roger Hutchinson hopes that those who seek the common good by banishing religion from the public realm and those who embrace religious diversity in our public space can work together.

While it is true that co-operation and goodwill marked the processes that led to the gradual acceptance of the study of religion as an academic discipline at undergraduate and graduate levels in the University of Toronto, it also true that disagreement, misunderstanding, and tangled histories were also part of the story.

I have been a participant in those processes for the past four decades, from my days as a doctoral student in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the seven theological schools associated with the University of Toronto created the Toronto School of Theology, to my years as a faculty member first in the University of Toronto's religious studies program then in the university's graduate Centre for Religious Studies. I was then appointed to the theological faculty of Emmanuel College and the Toronto School of Theology, where I was cross-appointed to the graduate Centre for Religious Studies.

This movement across boundaries gave me a heightened interest in the complex — and contested — relationships between theology and religious studies on the one hand and the public university and church-related institutions on the other.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF RELIGION

One of my first courses in religious studies was called "The changing role of religion in Canadian society." It seemed a straightforward task to describe the (either forced or willing) migration of formerly mainline denominations, such as the United Church, from the centre of Canadian society to its margins. According to the secularization theory that was dominant in the 1970s, the public realm was becoming increasingly "secular" while religion was being —rightly — reduced to a purely "private" matter. Another, way, however, of looking at the changing role of religion in modern — or post-modern — society is emerging, and that is to shift the emphasis from secularization and secularism to religious and cultural diversity. In this view, rather than being banished to the margins of society, different religions and cultures — including the basic values and cultures of persons with no formal religious identity —- should participate in a shared, contested public realm. Consequently, controversies over particular policies — and over the role and responsibilities of a public university — will continue, but they will usually be debated in the context of respect for one anoth-


Photo by Mischa Bartkow

er's traditional affiliations and basic identities.

Accordingly, I became sensitized to the importance of paying attention to diversity both among and within religious and cultural traditions in my contemporary issues courses and in my research projects. As I became more attentive to the diversity of my students, I found it relatively easy to adapt my approach to a religious studies setting in which not all students shared my Christian, and particularly my United Church, identity. What was difficult was doing justice to the perspectives of students whose assumptions about individual freedom, religious authority, and so forth differed from the "situation ethics" in vogue among liberal Protestants when I started teaching. From the standpoint of Roman Catholic, conservative Protestant, and Orthodox Jewish students, situation ethics reflected my liberal Protestant outlook rather than a theologically neutral stance. As I wrote at the time:

> The desire to be non-confessional, that is to avoid providing instruction in a particular faith, was a necessary but insufficient response to the religious diversity I discovered both among different religious groups and within each tradition. It was necessary to become more self-consciously comparative, both at the levels of factual claims and ethical arguments and at the level of interpretative frameworks.

It also became clear to me that it was also necessary to acknowledge deep-seated differences within particular traditions as well as among different religions and cultures. In addition to paying attention to religious diversity in the classroom, I also became more interested in the way conflicting positions on issues ranging from abortion to homosexuality to northern pipelines were being handled either in particular churches or in ecumenical settings, such as inter-church social action coalitions. In nineteenth-century Canada, Lord Durham found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state. In relation to the pipeline debate I saw Christian factions warring within the bosom of a single church. It seemed easier to achieve open and undistorted communication among representatives of either different religious traditions or different Christian denominations than it was among members of a particular church. I became intrigued by the possibility that the protocols and categories developed for cross-cultural studies and interfaith and ecumenical dialogue could be applied to debates within a particular religious group. In other words, in discussions within as well as among religious communities — and between members of particular religions and those with no particular religion — it was important to acknowledge that the general orientation, norms, and substantive judgments of one faction should not be presumed to be normative for all factions within a particular group.


Photo by Mischa Bartkow

This conversion from secularization to diversity as the background framework for the study of theology and religion in public and church-related contexts prompted me to rethink my understanding of the transition from religious knowledge to religious studies at the undergraduate level and the relationship between the graduate Centre for Religious Studies and the Toronto School of Theology.

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Undergraduate teaching about religion at the University of Toronto emerged from the religious knowledge courses offered by the church-related federated institutions in combination with a program that became the Department of Near Eastern Studies. The first step in this transition was the creation of a Department of Religious Studies. I recall animated debates about whether the new collaborative effort should be called "department of" (to stress its unity) or "departments of" (to emphasize the continuing distinctiveness of each partner). There were also discussions about what the shift from religious knowledge to religious studies entailed. For example, during an early curriculum committee meeting, there was a somewhat heated debate over a course proposal "to teach the mysteries." Those of us who suggested that a religious studies course would be more appropriately described either as "teaching about" the mysteries or as a comparative study of rituals and sacraments were viewed by some of our colleagues as secularizers.

There was resistance within the university to religious studies as an academic discipline. As Gordon Watson pointed out in his 1997 publication, *Religious Studies in the University of Toronto*, there were members of the faculty of arts and science who did not believe either that religious studies "could ever free itself from confessional contamination, or that it was a worthy subject for a University curriculum, even if it could." There were others "who held to the view that religion should not be desecrated by the cold, analytical prying of scientists and academics." A third group believed that teaching religion in a public university would be illegal.

By the mid-1970s the energetic promotion of religious studies as a discipline or area of study suitable for a public university led to the creation of the Department of Religious Studies. Lingering anxieties about the confusing, if not contaminating, effect of the attribution of "religious" to an academic method produced a further change in name to the Department for the Study of Religion, where today, scholars both with and without a personal religious affiliation work together on the basis of a shared commitment to the academic, non-confessional study of religion. According to the department, the study of religion is distinguished by the uniqueness of its subject matter and the diversity of its methods. "Its subject matter is global: the scriptures, institutions, teachings, rituals, devotions, iconography, and moral injunctions of all the world's religious traditions. As such, religious studies is inherently cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary," reads the department's program description.

The question begged by this description is whether individual scholars can both share the commitments of a particular religious tradition and meet the criteria for teaching about religion in a public university. My own view is that as the background framework continues to shift from a homogenizing secularist ideology to a self-consciously affirmed acceptance of a religiously and culturally diverse public realm, this concern will seem less relevant. As one Jewish colleague has said, as a philosopher he can speak "as a" Jew without having it assumed that he is speaking normatively "for" Jews. This may eventually be an acceptable stance for members of formerly dominant traditions as well.

While undergraduate religious studies was evolving from religious knowledge to religious studies to the study of religion, parallel conversations and developments were taking place regarding the graduate study of religion at the university.

THE CENTRE FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND THE TORONTO SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Discussions leading to the creation of a graduate program in religious studies were characterized by a number of concerns. One set of outside appraisers concluded that the University of Toronto was so complex that any proposal for a centre involving the federated universities and a number of departments would be completely unmanageable. (Key university administrators were then so offended by the suggestion that the

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University of Toronto was unable to manage its affairs that they became strong defenders of the Centre!)

Another concern was that the participation of the Toronto School of Theology would threaten the academic quality of the proposed master's and PhD programs, but the dean of the School of Graduate Studies assured sceptics that the criteria would be those of the School of Graduate Studies, rigidly enforced."

The concern about Christian dominance was also counteracted by the realization that scholars with a Christian commitment were also capable of engaging in cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary teaching and research characterized by respect for all religions.

A more challenging concern was that the school's participation would give the centre an overwhelmingly Christian character. This fear was addressed through collaboration among related departments and centres and by appointing new faculty members who were specialists in one or another non-Christian tradition. The concern about Christian dominance was also counteracted by the realization that scholars with a Christian commitment were also capable of engaging in cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary teaching and research characterized by respect for all religions.

CO-EXISTING PARADIGMS AND CONTESTED CATEGORIES

I have given the impression that the "old" secularization paradigm has been gradually replaced by a post-modern emphasis on a public realm characterized by religious and cultural diversity. However, it is more accurate to acknowledge the co-existence of alternative frameworks. For example, the continuing influence of the secularization framework can be discerned at Toronto's Victoria University whenever the view is expressed that Victoria College is an integral part of the "public" university, while Emmanuel College, as a church-related theological college, resembles a private, "faith-based" institution. Another example is the fact that although theological degrees granted by the federated universities are now conjointly awarded with the University of Toronto, the Toronto School of Theology is not even mentioned in a recent major history of the U of T.

On the other hand, qualified theological school faculty are cross-appointed to the Centre for the Study of Religion. There also appears to be a growing acceptance of the fact that newer religious minorities and formerly dominant groups all feel included in an increasingly diverse "commons." For example, the new director of the university's Multi-faith Centre reports that he received a warm welcome not in spite of, but because of his United Church connection. Perhaps those who seek the common good by banishing religion from the public realm and those of us who celebrate the religious diversity of our shared public space can work together to resist the reduction of wisdom to training and the growing influence of private sector interests which are now the main threats to the role and responsibilities of a public university. AM

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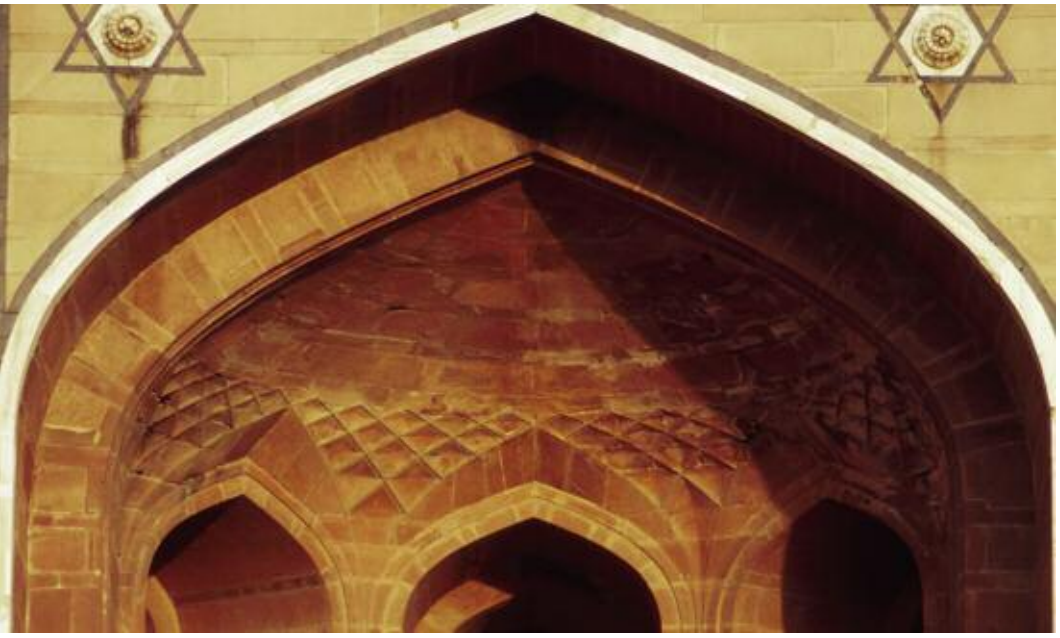


Jewish Studies, the State of Israel, and anti-Semitism on Canadian campuses

York University's Martin Lockshin describes how Jewish Studies have become an almost universal offering at Canadian universities — but within a chilly climate.

In the early 1960s, virtually no Canadian universities had Jewish Studies offerings. The few that did usually taught about Jewish matters in the framework of Christian theology training. In those days it was felt that knowledgeable Christian clergy had to know some Hebrew and ideally should be acquainted with the classics of rabbinic literature, the Mishnah and the Talmud, since they were produced in the years of the early Christian church in Judea and neighbouring countries.

So a handful of Canadian universities—usually ivy-covered ones, with relics of nineteenth-century Christian confessional structure—taught Hebrew Bible, biblical Hebrew grammar and rabbinic literature in the fifties and early sixties. But the perspective of such courses left much to be desired. Rabbinic law is taught today in many good law schools as a fascinating independent legal-religious system, but then it was often taught as the corrupt, soulless form of Pharisaic Judaism against which Jesus and his earliest followers polemicized. Hebrew Bible, an intriguing corpus of ancient prose, poetry and law that made a mark on the western world and beyond, was often taught in those days as the old blood-and-guts testament of a vengeful God that eventually came to be replaced or at least refined by a new improved testament of love and mercy.

As for the Hebrew language, which some Jews spoke and many wrote for the last three thousand years and which is now spoken by millions of people and in which some of the most cutting-edge scholarship on Bible and Judaism (and many other areas) is produced, it was then taught as a language that died 2000 years ago by professors/theologians who were not embarrassed by the fact that they did not know how to read modern Hebrew. Good Hebrew Bible professors then knew many post-biblical languages: they could generally read texts relevant to the Bible in classical Greek, medieval Latin and modern French and German. Yet almost none of them could read the classics of the Jewish exegetical tradition or critical scholarship produced in modern Hebrew.

Many changes occurred in general Canadian society in the 1960s that slowly affected the nature of the academy and had a positive effect on the field of Jewish Studies. In those years, the idea of multiculturalism grew, with the concomitant interest in ethnic studies. The Jewish community in Canada became stronger; it began to give serious support to universities in general and to academic Jewish Studies in particular. The influence of Christianity on Canadian society at large and on the academy waned. Most people stopped believing that "Canada is a Christian country." (Growing up in Toronto, I can remember hearing that line fairly often in the mid-sixties, but almost never

since.) Polite intellectual anti-Semitism—quite common throughout the West—started becoming less fashionable for a variety of reasons, particularly as people began to learn of the enormity of the crimes committed by anti-Semites in cultured Europe during the Holocaust.

When we compare the situation today to 45 years ago the difference is overwhelming. Today virtually every major university in Canada teaches Jewish Studies. It is possible to major, earn a doctorate and do cutting-edge research in Jewish Studies. In many sub-fields of Jewish Studies, Canada has a reputation as being a world leader, not only in expected fields like Canadian Jewish Studies, but also in rabbinic literature, Jewish biblical exegesis, the works of Josephus Flavius, Holocaust literature, and more. When academic friends of mine in other countries hear that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, a government research funding agency has given me and my colleagues grants to research what some consider antiquarian medieval texts, they are astounded and jealous.

Many Canadian faculty members have stellar publishing records and world-wide reputations in Jewish Studies. The president of the premier organization of Jewish Studies scholars, the Association for Jewish Studies, is a colleague, Professor Sara Horowitz. A few Jewish Studies scholars in Canada have risen through the academic ranks; some have become deans and vice-presidents. One is a university president, Dr. Jack Lightstone at Brock, a prolific scholar of classical rabbinic literature and of Canadian Jewish Studies.

There are people both inside and outside the university who have the mistaken impression that teaching Jewish Studies (or Christian Studies) in the university means "teaching someone to be a good Jew (or a good Christian)."

These developments in Canadian academia should be celebrated as important accomplishments. But the field of Jewish Studies does face significant challenges.

Some of these challenges are the same as those experienced by all professors in Canada who teach about religion or ethnicity. There are people both inside and outside the university who have the mistaken impression that teaching Jewish Studies (or Christian Studies) in the university means "teaching someone to be a good Jew (or a good Christian)." But that is not the case. Jewish Studies courses in Canada and elsewhere are taught by people of many religious and political perspectives, to students who are Jewish, Muslim, Christian and others. The majority of the instructors are from Jewish backgrounds (just as most Islamic Studies professors are from Muslim backgrounds and most Women's Studies professors are women). At my university, Jewish Studies and Islamic Studies professors work extremely well together, have organized a number of cooperative academic ventures, and have good personal relationships with each other. Most of us in Jewish Studies have strong connections to the State of Israel, where Jewish Studies scholarship is most advanced, where almost half of the Jews of the world live, and where a lively and creative Jewish culture is developing.

While respect for Jewish Studies has increased over recent years, it is ironic that its classification in academic thinking has changed and not for the better. Years ago when Canadian universities generally honoured only "western civilization," Jewish Studies was considered non-western, or oriental. Now that universities are making serious efforts to teach non-western civilization, suddenly Jewish Studies is defined by most academicians as western! The situation is not so different from the irony that scholars have recently identified concerning the racial classification of Jews in North America. In the beginning of the twentieth century, when privileges were reserved for whites, Jews

were invariably defined as non-whites. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, on the other hand, when affirmative action for non-whites is on the rise, the racial construct of what it means to be white now includes Jews.

The biggest challenge for Jewish Studies professors in Canada today relates to the connections that most of us have to the State of Israel and to the organized Jewish community.

Jewish Studies professors who have personal and academic connections to the State of Israel—even people like me who support a two-state solution and have spoken out publicly for peace talks and compromise—often find other problems in our campus life. There are professors on Canadian campuses who take advantage of their positions to bash Israel in their classrooms. This makes the work atmosphere unpleasant (and, even worse, makes the study atmosphere for Jewish and Zionist students very difficult.) It also betrays the larger mission of the university and poses obstacles to students seeking understanding of the genuine complexities of the contemporary Middle East.

In my conversations with Jewish Studies colleagues I find a strong aversion to the idea of using the podium we have been given by our employers as a bully pulpit to advance our own political agendas. When students sign up for a course with me about pre-modern Judaica, they can be sure that they will be spared my deeply-held views on the modern State of Israel. It would be easy for me to pontificate there about my convictions that Israel is the only true democracy in the Middle East, the only country there with respect for the rights of women, homosexuals, and trade unionists. In my pre-modern Judaica classes, my students will not hear my fears that almost all modern Arab States have essentially become *judenrein* and that the Christian minorities in many Arab countries have very little freedom of religion, and that the million or so Arab citizens of the State of Israel have more rights and freedoms than Arabs living in most Arab countries. If students come to my office and ask what I think, I will gladly tell them. But to exploit the podium that I have been given—finding some artificial "hook" to connect my politics to the materials I teach—seems to me unthinkable. Sadly, not all faculty members in Canada share this approach.

Two years ago a bright Jewish Studies student came to my office for advising. I encouraged him in his desire to take a course (that was not connected to Judaism) with a young faculty member whom I knew, but not well. A few months later the upset student forwarded to me an e-mail that the professor had sent to all his students excoriating the State of Israel and encouraging students to take political action against it. This instructor knows no Hebrew or Arabic. He has no training in Middle Eastern Studies, no professional knowledge of the area and has never taught anything remotely connected to the subject. As a scholar of religion I recognized that the instructor had a deeply-held belief in the evil of the State of Israel. His belief had all the trappings of a religious belief, although in this case he was simply a member of the radical left. He chose to use whatever powers he had to advance his religious belief, even though it had nothing to with what he had been hired to teach. I actually contacted this instructor and had a long discussion with him about the ethics of teaching. At the end, he thanked me and told me that he would change his behaviour. But I know well (from incessant student complaints to me about other instructors) that the problem is widespread at Ontario universities.

Perhaps one last story will round out my description of the "chilly climate" that many Jewish Studies instructors experience in Ontario universities. A few years ago the self-styled progressive forces on my campus started publishing a newspaper entitled Critical Times. Funding came from a number of sources, including my own union (the York University Faculty Association [YUFA]). Many of us felt that the paper was of extremely low intellectual quality and seemed to be interested in attacking only three targets: the administration of York University and the governments of the United States and the State of Israel. Complaints to the paper about bias were of no avail. Complaints to my union initially did not help either. But I was encouraged to write an article for the paper. So I did, on the problem of anti-Semitism in Canada and in academia. My thesis was that Jews are better off than many minority groups in Canada, but that anti-Semitism is not a spent force and that it is disturbing that the progressive forces rarely if ever speak out against anti-Semitism.

There are professors on Canadian campuses who take advantage of their positions to bash Israel in their classrooms.

The editors of *Critical Times* first "lost" my article. Then they told me that they would agree to publish it only if I agreed that it appear together with another piece on the same subject written from a different perspective. I naturally agreed (even though *Critical Times*, like all publications with a deeply felt orthodoxy, had never before published two articles with opposing viewpoints). However, just before publication, I was informed that the editorial collective had changed its mind and had decided not to publish my article but only the response piece they had commissioned. The editors made the risible claim that their article and mine were so similar that it would have been redundant to publish both.

This story did have a basically happy ending. Knowledge of this absurd story on campus was, I believe, one of the factors that led to the withdrawal of YUFA funding from *Critical Times* and the eventual apparent demise of the publication. The paper seems to be gone; the chilly climate remains.

The story of Jewish Studies in Canadian universities is generally a story of success. The major problems that we experience are not of an academic nature but the problem of overcoming religious orthodoxies. Fifty years ago it was the problem of overcoming Christian-centric supersessionism; today it is the conflict with the orthodoxy of the radical left, which has all the trappings of a fundamentalist belief system. AM

Martin Lockshin is a professor of Humanities and Hebrew at York University. He is on sabbatical in Jerusalem in 2007-2008

University chaplaincy for today's students: What does it mean?

Ecumenical chaplaincies at universities do more than build community while nurturing spirituality and ethical values. Wherever a university has such a spiritual and religious resource, Carleton University chaplain Tom Sherwood argues, it is better able to maintain its own best tradition and integrity.

When community and university leaders were establishing the Ecumenical Chaplaincy at Carleton University in the early 1960s, they could not have foreseen the society we have today; but they did anticipate the value of spiritual care and religious advisory services.

People don't hang up their spirituality on some post at the entrance of the campus when they come to study or work at a university or college. If they are religious or spiritual, that dimension of their worldview continues to be a part of who they are. It may not be obvious or externalized in the performance of their academic roles, but it is certainly part of their essential human identity in terms of relationships, emotions, hopes, and values.

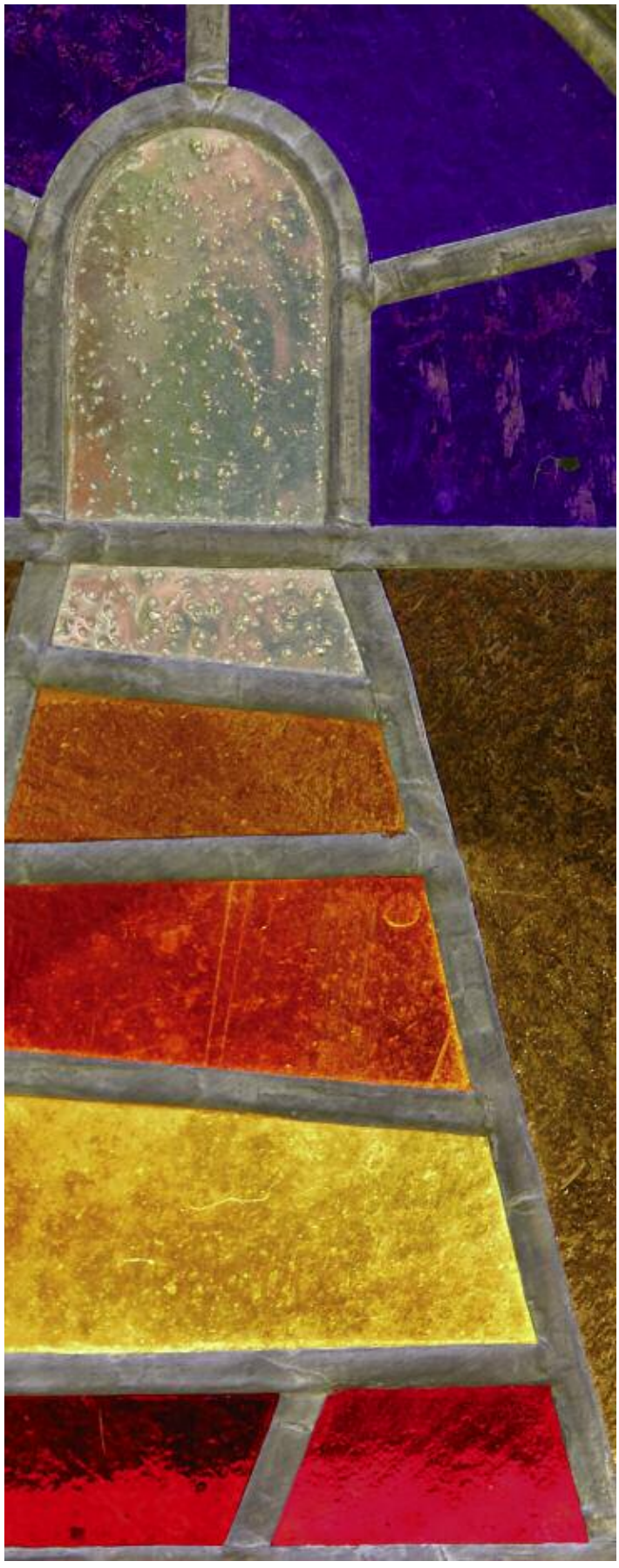
"Chaplain" is normally defined as a religious professional in a specialized, institutional setting, such as a hospital or children's hospital, a school, mental health centre, a hospice, the military, a political institution, or a corporate setting.

They may not be religious in the ways that their parents and grandparents were. Perhaps that has always been the case, but the religiosity cleavage between people born after 1975 and previous generations is a wide gulf. Sitting with students in my Chaplaincy Centre at Carleton, I have heard people say, "Our family only had one rule when I was growing up: you had to brush your teeth before going to bed." When I ask a crowded lecture hall of students if any of them have never attended a formal religious ritual of any kind, several hands go up. Each week at least one person says to me, "I'm not religious, but I am spiritual." It is usually a student, sometimes a member of faculty, or staff. They usually mean that they connect with some sense of the sacred, some concept of timeless and eternal values and existence, but in very personal, individual and eclectic ways. Some people coming into my office for counselling or other conversation declare clearly at the outset that they are atheists or agnostics or, at least, doubters.

AND YET THEY COME TO SEE THE CHAPLAIN.

It may simply be that I am available. I keep open office hours in a "storefront" location at the centre of the academic precinct, between the bank and the bookstore, and there are thousands of classroom seats within two minutes of my office. Thousands of students go by each day between classes. Perhaps they choose to confide in me because I am not a doctor or psychiatrist or psychologist. They may know — or hope — that I don't use a medical model in my response to their concern. They may know that I'm a religious professional, grounded in my own faith tradition, trained to deal with spiritual issues, experienced in helping people call on their own religious traditions and spiritual resources. They may have heard me give a guest lecture in one of their courses and decided to trust me. One of their friends may have told them that I am trustworthy. They may simply be curious.

Photo by Mischa Bartkow



The sign beside my open door says "Ecumenical Chaplain." Sometimes students stop to ask me what "chaplain" means. Sometimes they ask me about "ecumenical" – firstly how to pronounce it, then, "What does it mean?" I've learned that there are two problems with this two-word job title coined in 1965: the two words. The terms are certainly not fashionable today, but the ideas behind them are. The students have come to translate "ecumenical" as "global" or "without borders" – like "Doctors without Borders" or "Engineers without Borders." They deeply appreciate an inclusive religious attitude — especially in contrast to the histories of religious intolerance that they may be aware of in Canada and other countries.

"Chaplain" is normally defined as a religious professional in a specialized, institutional setting, such as a hospital or children's hospital, a school, mental health centre, a hospice, the military, a political institution, or a corporate setting. The word "chaplain" comes from western European Christian culture: a priest serving a private chapel. That isn't what it means anymore: I have no chapel at Carleton University; Zak Kaye is the Jewish chaplain at the University of Toronto; and Abdul Hai Patel the Muslim chaplain there.

What does "chaplain" really mean in practice? I have permission to tell a story about a successful young professional, living and working in Ottawa. A few years ago, he was a graduate student at Carleton, and he was in crisis. He knew me a little from the Pause Table — the outreach program of free home baking and snacks that we do during December and April exams. Like a lot of students, though, he didn't come to the chaplaincy or to the chaplain until he was in trouble. And he was in trouble. As a result of a bad decision, his status as a graduate student and his professional future were at risk. The story has a good ending. He got through his crisis, completed his program, and got on with his life. But when he first presented himself to me, he was definitely a student at risk and not just with respect to his academic status. (University chaplains are regularly doing subtle, unspoken but systematic suicide risk assessment as they sit with depressed, anxious or agitated students. The suicide rate is one of the "dirty secrets" of post-secondary education.) In the middle of this student's crisis, there was a moment I will never forget. At the end of one of our consultations, he got up to leave my office, turned around, came back, and shook my hand. "Thank you Tom," he said. "You're the only one I can talk to about this… other than God."

As I religious professional, I'm probably supposed to say, "Talking to God is good. Listening too." We call it prayer. But we know, because our children and grandchildren tell us so, that sometimes we need someone with skin on.

A chaplain is someone with skin on, the human embodiment of caring concern and unconditional acceptance present to a person who feels uncared for and unworthy in a place where performance is evaluated and "conditional acceptance" is a familiar term.

What do university chaplains do? The "Four P's" of campus ministry are pastoral, prophetic, priestly and pedagogical.

These categories refer respectively to counselling, support and advisory services; peace, justice and environment programming, and ethical reflection; weddings, funerals and worship services; and educational programs. No chaplain does all those things well or tries to. Some chaplaincy teams are successful at such balance and variety, but individuals tend to focus.

At Carleton, I budget about 60 per cent of my personal time for pastoral activity, and coordinate a pastoral team which provides another 2.5 "person years" of counselling and open office hours. The pastoral support is very important. However I also plan and lead programs that speak a prophetic word of justice and ethics to the campus community. As the one full-time chaplain, I coordinate and facilitate clergy colleagues in other religions and various Christian denominations as they lead worship services on campus. Normally, I do not lead worship unless there is a need to conduct a memorial service on campus. I officiate at only two or three weddings per year, because I try to connect the couples with local congregations of their own tradition. Some university chaplains have chapels and regular chapel services to conduct. They may also have 20 or 30 weddings a year.

I also teach. In addition to the small-group chaplaincy programs in which I mentor and encourage spiritual growth, I teach religion courses in anthropology, sociology and religious studies as a contract instructor, and give guest lectures in a number of courses. I enjoy this activity in itself, but it also increases my effectiveness as chaplain.

Who comes to the chaplaincy? Many kinds of people: Muslim and Jewish students who ask questions about Christianity or are simply looking for referral into their own local faith communities; students researching assignments in any of the disciplines in the arts and social sciences, sometimes in architecture, design, journalism or business ethics; students looking for faith-based clubs or clubs related to peace, justice and environment issues; people concerned about racism, sexism, and homophobia; people looking for on-campus spirituality; people looking for support in the context of crisis; people hoping to be talked out of their suicidal feelings; Christians critical of the church; Christians asking, "Where's a good church?"

Do gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people come to the chaplaincy? Yes. And I am a familiar face in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer Centre at Carleton. For some time, we have been doing a program together called "Que(e)rying Religion." At Carleton, we bring in a religious leader from the community for conversation with students about issues of religion, faith and sexuality.

Do Aboriginal students come to the chaplaincy? Yes. The Aboriginal Lounge is just a few steps away from my office. I am a welcome guest there, and a number of Aboriginal students trust me and seek me out despite the history of the mission church and residential schools. They know I am associated with the 1986 United Church Native Apology and subsequent Healing Fund. Some native students will never trust me and will never come to the Chaplaincy; and I can respect and understand that.

But the chaplaincy is not for all the students, faculty, and staff. It does not seek or expect to be. Certainly, we could not staff it to provide spiritual counsel for 22,000 students. Chaplaincies at Canadian universities and colleges today are an item on a menu of student services. Not everyone needs or will use the Writing Tutorial Service, but the university must provide one. Not everyone will use the swimming pool or fitness centre, but our concept of university includes such facilities. Not everyone will use the religious and spiritual advisory services, but increasingly students expect them to be there.

This has come as a surprise to some university and college administrators. Several of the modern, post-war universities in Canada established themselves intentionally independent of organized religion. But the increasingly international and multi-faith make-up of the high-school-age population has put pressure on that strategy. Christians from other cultures may be more aggressive than Canadian-born Christians in asking for opportunity to practise their religion on campus. Jews, Muslims, Baha'is, Buddhists, Aboriginals and others may feel they need certain accommodations that the founders did not anticipate.

One of the modern dynamics that traditional chaplaincies and older universities have had to adapt to is the increasingly multi-faith diversity of the campus population.

Increasingly, university administrators, thinking in terms of fiscal concerns, recruitment and retention, realize that an effective multi-faith chaplaincy serves the university's mission statement.

One of the modern dynamics that traditional chaplaincies and older universities have had to adapt to is the increasingly multi-faith diversity of the campus population. Some universities, like the University of Victoria, provide for this with a large team of chaplains representing the different faiths. The university also has an Interfaith Chapel, a free-standing building used by adherents of more than a dozen world religions and the regular venue for diverse religious and spirituality programs. York University has a Multi-faith Centre, centrally located near the main library. The University of Toronto opened a new Multi-faith Centre in October 2006. Other universities are adapting space or considering the possibility of new space dedicated for use by religious and faith-based groups.

Brock University is an interesting example. Like Carleton, it was established to be secular, and a later generation of leaders had to devise a way to provide spiritual care. The chaplains are paid by off-campus religious organizations, but the university welcomes and appreciates them, offering practical accom-

modation and support. But what about space? My fellow ecumenical chaplain, George Addison writes:

> We are still working on making the Rita Welch Centre more welcoming to diverse faiths…. We have argued that the university should not merely tolerate different faiths on campus, but should accommodate in a generous and inclusive way by providing space on campus for religious life. Faith after all, cannot be confined purely to the private sphere, but is part of the landscape of the university. Further, the best way to deal with differences and possible conflict among people of faith is to recognize diversity and provide space and program dollars to promote inter-religious understanding and dialogue.

Many other Canadian universities are also considering how to provide space for spirituality at this time.

If space is difficult though, multi-faith programming is not. Sometimes it is essential that an event include the participation of several faith groups, sometimes it is simply desirable and possible. I arrange or participate in several multi-faith panels each year, addressing such issues as racism, gender roles, ethical issues, and public policy issues. These events enrich the intellectual and spiritual life of the campus community.

Multi-faith ritual is more difficult, but it can be done; and it may be even more important. For example, after 9/11, many campus communities were able to convene pastoral care services and prayer events on a multi-faith basis. The same needs arose after the tsunamis of December 2004, the shooting at Dawson College in September 2006, and again at Virginia Tech in April 2007.

For most of its centuries-old history, the university has been a place of community, spirituality and values. Contemporary conditions in Canadian society can make this difficult if not impossible.

Healing ritual needs to be multi-faith and perhaps invented. When the students asked me to convene a commemoration of the victims of 9/11 on the first anniversary, we developed a multi-faith prayer service in which nine world religions were accorded about five minutes each. I booked the event into a lounge at the top of the only high-rise building on campus. The religious groups used their time in different ways, but generally they read from scripture or recited from sacred tradition, and prayed. If the language was Hebrew or Arabic or Sanskrit or Cree, the speaker would explain in English or translate. Students told me afterward that they had expected to feel like spectators during most of the ceremony. Some of them were surprised to realize how touched they were and how much their own spirituality was expressed during the leadership of some of the other religious groups. Some of the students most touched by the ritual and most appreciative identified themselves as being "not religious."

After the speakers had taken their turns, I invited the 100 or so students to join in a circle, holding hands to symbolize our hope for the oneness of humanity and to remind us that people who are holding hands cannot throw things at each other. Then, silently we walked down the 44 flights of stairs, remembering the victims of the two New York towers, remembering, too, that some of the victims had been rescue workers on their way up.

University students feel fragile under the stress of economic, academic, and time pressure. They feel especially vulnerable at the beginning of a new year and during exams. The fact that 9/11 occurred during the first week of classes increased the trauma for the students I dealt with. Some were just learning their new roommate's name, just meeting their professors and class-mates for the first time. They had left a familiar support system and not yet established the new one. Similarly, the exam-time context magnified the wave of fear and anxiety that rippled through Canadian campuses last April when 32 people were killed at Virginia Tech

The first few years after high school are a critical period of risk and decision-making for young adults in Canadian society. They choose their careers, their lifestyles, their life partners, perhaps, and their styles of citizenship in society. It is a time of vocational discernment in the broadest sense, not only in terms of jobs and careers. It is a time of identity discernment.

At Carleton, and elsewhere, I'm sure, students use the chaplaincy as a safe place to do that discernment in conversation with others as they reflect on the curriculum, get to know themselves better, develop their own ethical identities, and discuss public issues. They may become educators, civil servants, scientists, entrepreneurs, doctors, social workers, politicians, managers, architects, engineers, or anything. But for the large population of students who participate in the chaplaincy programs, hang out in the Chaplaincy Centre and engage myself and my associates in conversation, their vocational decisions are based in part on religious values or a spiritual identity.

For most of its centuries-old history, the university has been a place of community, spirituality and values. Contemporary conditions in Canadian society can make this difficult if not impossible. There isn't enough space at most universities and colleges for adequate common rooms; the students commute to class and rush away to their part-time jobs; traditional religious institutions struggle in post-modern culture; materialism, pragmatism and harsh economic realities erode ethical thinking. At Carleton, the ecumenical chaplaincy functions to build community, nurture and express spirituality, and articulate ethical values. Wherever a university has such a spiritual and religious resource, it is better able to maintain its own best tradition and integrity. AM

Tom Sherwood is an ordained United Church minister with a PhD in sociology. He has been Ecumenical Chaplain at Carleton University since 1999.

Religion and Ecology in the Canadian Academy: Scientific Knowledge Has Its Limits

The ecological crisis raises critical questions about the meaning of existence itself and deeply confronts our ability to hope. Anne Marie Dalton of St Mary's University believes the new field of Religion and Ecology can help.

Both religion and ecology are mainstream these days. Neither elicits much feeling of comfort. Less mainstream is a new field of study that brings religion and ecology together and that has been quietly working its way into the academy. Canadian universities list on the internet more than 50 courses in either Religion and Ecology or Theology and Ecology. American sociologists Scott Frickel and Neil Gross have developed a convincing account of how politics, power, and resistance come into play in the development of new fields of study, especially when the new topic under consideration has political implications or stretches the perceived boundaries of academia. Delegating resources, awarding tenure and promotion, recognition by high-level journals, and awarding grants are all sources of power within academia. Faculty attempting to introduce new fields of study risk losing some or all these rewards. Given such risks, creative new initiatives are often undertaken by those motivated by larger ideological concerns.

According to Frickel and Gross, whether a new topic achieves success as a recognized academic program depends on a number of factors both internal and external to the universi-

ty. Among these are the persistence of dedicated advocates, the relevance of the new field to students, and the ability to glean resources. In 1976, Emero Stiegman, professor in the religious studies department at Saint Mary's University, initiated a course

The transition from Christian theology taught in seminaries and Christian colleges to Religious Studies as a secular discipline was not an easy one.

called "Religion and Ecology," one of the very first courses so titled offered at a Canadian university. Stiegman recalls that it was considered strange at the time to think that religion had anything to say about ecology. Questions were asked about it being nothing more than a fad created by the flower children of the era. He describes meetings in Halifax of an association of local academics and professionals called "Man and the Biosphere" where, to some of the participants, including a scholar of religion represented a somewhat desperate effort for cultural inclusion at a time of ecological crisis.

Stiegman was under suspicion on two accounts. Ecology outside scientific disciplines was considered New Age and faddish by many, while religion occupied a fragile place in many Canadian universities. The transition from Christian theology taught in seminaries and Christian colleges to Religious Studies as a secular discipline was not an easy one. Religion had to prove itself as a respectable academic discipline and faced challenges Frickel and Gross identified. A number of scholars wrote one or a few articles in the 1970s and 1980s, and then their names disappeared from the field. I was strongly counselled by one of my professors to concentrate on something "more serious" when I wrote a paper on the subject during my Master's studies in 1980. A few early voices, such as Thomas Berry, Joseph Sittler, and Rosemary Radford Ruether in the United States and Stephen Dunn in Toronto, were raising the view that the ecological crisis was a religious issue, and they were no doubt incorporating this view into already-established courses. But the formal recognition of such courses and programs by universities was slow.

University courses in Religion and Ecology did not begin in a social vacuum. There had been a growing public awareness of an ecological crisis and an increase in activism around ecological issues. Some of these new environmentalists were labeled, rightly or wrongly, as New Age, romantic, elitist, or associated with back-to-the-land movements. Others, however, had earned their stripes in the peace movements centred on the American war in Vietnam and during anti-nuclear campaigns. Greenpeace was founded largely by a small group in British Columbia who was also active in the anti-war movement. The first Earth Day was held in 1970, and reports from the time indicate a broad spectrum of the public, especially young activists, taking part.

Other factors that contributed to the relative success and growth of Religion and Ecology courses in the academy included a spirit of renewal within Christian mainline churches and a burgeoning interest in inter-religious conversation. There was also a discontent with university ivory tower atmospheres and a consequent push toward a more engaged form of scholarship, which included interdisciplinary programs. Not only students, but also the faculty members hired in large numbers in the university expansions of the 1960s and 1970s, were imbued with, and emboldened by, the counter-culture movements of the sixties. Steigman recalls that when he first conceived a course addressing the ecological crisis within the context of secular theology, it was an outgrowth of the critiques of religion stemming from the 1960s.

Between then and now, courses and programs in Religion and Ecology have grown steadily in numbers and in respect in Canadian universities. Stiegman's course in Religion and Ecology is still a popular one at Saint Mary's, which also offers a course in Religion and Ecology in the developing world. Both courses can contribute to a degree in Environmental Studies; one is also a credit towards a degree in International Development Studies.

Two prominent and successful programs are the graduate degree program at the University of Saint Michael's College, University of Toronto, and the Centre for Religion and Society, which is attached to the University of Victoria. Both of these programs are illustrative of the nature of Religion and Ecology as a field of study. The program at Saint Michael's took root in the early 1990s, largely due to the persistence and diplomacy of Stephen Dunn, a professor of ethics at that time. Dunn had already conducted sessions around the work of Thomas Berry at a retreat centre in Port Burwell, Ontario. He had also retooled some of his courses in ethics to consider seriously the ecological

crisis. He sensed that there was a readiness on the part of the faculty to explore new directions, in the light of the budget tightening and decline in faculty that was characteristic of the late 1980s and early 1990s. There was also increasing demand from students for serious academic conversation about the ecological crisis and the response of religions. In response to pressure from students and the urgency of the ecological crisis, the faculty decided according to Dunn, "to, make a contribution to the healing of the Earth in all its life systems, and express its concern for the ecological crisis of the planet". The mechanism was a new institute for theology and ecology, now called the Elliott Allen Institute for Theology and Ecology.

The program established at Saint Michael's allowed students in any graduate degree program to receive a diploma of specialization in Theology and Ecology. From the perspective of satisfactory career structures, this plan enabled students who had specialized in Theology and Ecology to acquire a recognizable professional degree on the basis of which to be hired. The specialization may or may not be of primary interest to the hiring entity, but the graduate was able to both train in and pursue interests in this specialization.

The strategy Dunn proposed was what he called *Three Shades of Green*." Deep Green" involved core courses that dealt directly with eco-theology (e.g., Christian ethicists and ecology, or feminist theology and eco-feminism) and cross-disciplinary courses dealing with ecological studies. "Intermediate Green" is a category of courses that sets a context for a new paradigm containing essential elements conducive to pursuing ecological interests (Religion and Science or Religion of Native Peoples). "Light Green" describes the rest of the courses of the theological spectrum. There are courses that make no specific reference to ecological issues and, where professors may not be comfortable making ecological connections, but allow students to pursue ecological themes within traditional course content, such as church history or systematic theology.

The Centre for Studies in Religion and Society was established at the University of Victoria in 1991 "to foster the scholarly study of religion in relation to any and all aspects of society and culture, both historical and contemporary." While the centre does not grant degrees or give diplomas, it provides a lively style of scholarship, which has resulted in highly ranked publications on many ecological topics in relationship to religion, such as population, climate change, and the fishery crisis. It is characterized by its highly cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, and inter-religious conversations. Scholars, activists, professionals, students, business leaders, government officials, and community members from anywhere in the world interact on specific issues, and religion is always a partner. This model is suited *par excellence* to the vision inherent in Religion and Ecology as a discipline. It is both scholarly and engaged; it thwarts the narrower perception of the academy as a place removed from worldly affairs.

Among the indicators of the academic success of any new topic, Frickel and Gross include acceptance of papers at academic conferences and by highly regarded publications. The Forum on Ecology and Religion (FORE) and its Canadian counterpart, (CFORE) grew out of a series of conferences held at Harvard University from 1996 to 1998. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim obtained substantial on-going funding for the Forum to continue and expand the work of the conferences. Papers from the conferences were published in a prominent series entitled World Religions and Ecology Book Series. The Canadian wing, founded in 2004, has conducted several small conferences and lectures across Canada, collaborated with ecological organizations in hosting events, and ensured that papers and panels addressing ecological issues are presented at annual meetings of relevant academic societies, such as Canadian Society for the Study of Religion and the Canadian Theological Society.

All indications are that Religion and Ecology as a field of study is doing well in Canadian universities. In the end what counts, however, is its transformative impact in promoting ecological responsibility. As is the case with the educational endeavour generally, direct causal lines are difficult to trace, and no systematic effort has been made to do so. John Cobb, Jr., a long-time scholar in Religion and Ecology, has commented that the resistance to environmental responsibility within universities reflects the structural divisions of the universities into subjects and departments, whereas "greening" requires a sense of relatedness and kinship—feelings about what one is studying.

All indications are that Religion and Ecology as a field of study is doing well in Canadian universities. In the end what counts, however, is its transformative impact in promoting ecological responsibility.

The growing acceptance of the field may be an indication in itself that inroads have been made. There are other signs of greening by Canadian universities. The University of British Columbia received the Green Campus Award from the National Wildlife Federation in 2003, and other universities have joined the green campus movement.

Religion and Ecology belongs with a coterie of courses and organizations dedicated to re-imagining life on this planet in an ecologically sustainable way. As a university discipline, it not only provides expertise and resources to the substantial number of Canadian religious adherents, but it also creates a space for scholars and students to research and consider the diverse ways in which humans have confronted overwhelming challenges throughout history. The ecological crisis raises critical questions about the meaning of existence itself and deeply confronts our ability to hope. It is to this dimension of the ecological crisis that religious studies has the most to offer. Scientific knowledge and know-how is essential, but without the hope and passion that inspired those who initiated such engaged fields as Religion and Ecology there will be little effective change. It is this dimension that remains the cutting-edge of Religion and Ecology. AM

Anne Marie Dalton is a professor of religious studies at Saint Mary's University, Halifax.

By Desi Di Nardo

STROLL BY SNOW LIGHT

On the night the streets have emptied
and this leaning coat of powder embarks on new limits
the quiet solitude is all that is left
and it takes up all our energy
as musings skirt along the lesser shadows
there is no steering of the moon
over the lightness of each step
only the bandage of white succumbing
as far as our fingers can reach
injected into orbital illumination
like a bullet wedged into a catheter
it feeds us through a vein
and we are delighted to exit the fusty air finally
to enter the blaze
diffused by the buoyancy of each blinking flake.

YOUR FIRST FEET

Sometimes there are no words
think of a line hummed, a feeling blithe as air
a feather that glides from a handled bird
the first twitch a fetus makes
a quiver of violin strings
you are present in each of these instances
you have only to relax your wrists and
think of the warm morning milk over your lips
all the wriggling tails
isn't it beautiful?
don't you feel like dying a little?
can you picture us in a foreign country?
dancing on the terrace, the cobblestone trails
close to your mouth
can you feel yourself opened, curious
your first feet kissing the romantic mist.

PIECES OF THE MAP

When the summer is still and conquered by
the soundless beam of fireflies
I know you will have more left to talk about
we will hold each other's wrists and venture out
the courage will leak from one breast and
we will be contented to be sucked in by the moonlight
easeful over the mellow nights to remind us
of the mornings when we will make like birds and
cover a piece of the map
passing over the bloated belly of the sun
to carp in songs of utter anguish
and look where it leaves us and what it gives away.

Desi Di Nardo's work has appeared in numerous journals including the *Literary Review of Canada, Descant, Globe and Mail, Grain, National Post, The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad, Ars Medica, Canadian Woman Studies, 13th Moon, On Spec,* and *Rampike*. Her poetry has been performed at the National Arts Centre for International Women's Day, featured in *Poetry on the Way* on the Toronto Transit Commission, selected by Canada's Parliamentary Poet Laureate for "Poems of the Week," and displayed in the Official Residences of Canada.

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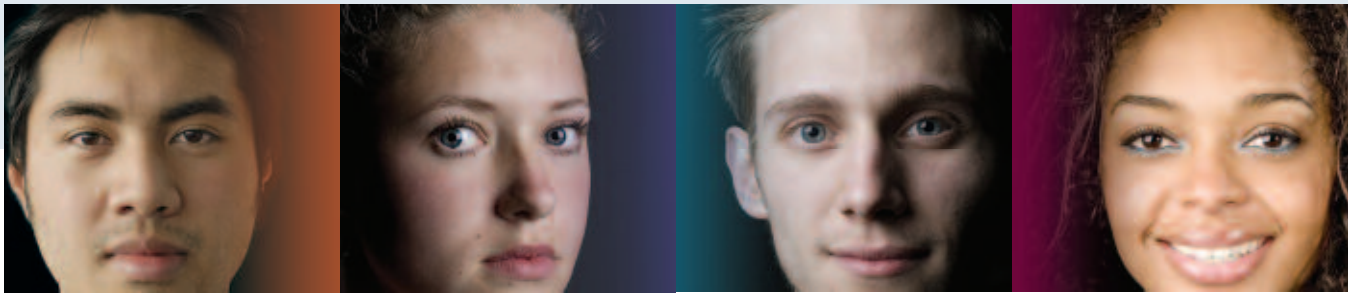

Mark Rosenfeld

Religion in the Quad

Last year, a survey of 1,500 professors in a range of disciplines and institutions across the United States concluded that American academics were more religious than commonly assumed, although not as religious as the general population.

The study, titled "How Religious Are America's College and University Professors?", found that 20 per cent of respondents believed in "a Higher Power of some kind," while a further 35 per cent had no doubt about the existence of a God. More than 15 per cent were believers with some doubts. One-third stated that they were not religious. Almost 30 per cent considered themselves religious "moderates," while one-quarter said they were religious "progressives." Slightly more than 10 per cent self-identified as "traditionalists."

There does not appear to be a comparable study for Canadian academics. Does it matter if Canadian (or American) academics are religious and believe in a god? Do religious beliefs affect what academics teach, how they do research, and the way they interact with their students?

> Are there limits to accommodation? At what point is academic freedom and scholarly integrity compromised?

According to the US study, while many academics in public and private non-religious institutions viewed themselves as religious, they also believed in the separation of church and state and were not receptive to blurring the boundaries between science and religion.

We still know relatively little, however, about how religious adherence today may influence an academic's chosen field of study, an understanding of that field, and a relationship to academia in general. But we know that academics do not exist in a vacuum. The professional identities of faculty are not hermetically sealed from the identities of social class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion.

As the articles in this issue make clear, religion does matter on university campuses — and not only in the field of religious studies. Until recently, we had assumed that the public realm, including universities, was becoming, in North America and Europe, increasingly more secular. According to this theory, religion was being reduced to a private concern as a rational, scientific worldview underpinned by liberal democracy and the marketplace became pervasive.

Events over the past decade have challenged the secularization thesis. Long after the Scopes trial, there are now intense debates, particularly in the United States, between scriptural literalists and the scientific community about the teaching of creationism and "intelligent design." Even within the scientific community, where there is consensus on the theory of evolution's validity, some worry about viewing science as absolute truth and religious and spiritual values as entirely irrelevant. They argue that it is no credit to either science or religion to deal with uncertainty by being absolutely certain.

The growing religious and cultural diversity of students on university campuses has raised questions about tolerance and accommodation. A great deal of attention has focused on Muslim students. At some universities, more so in the United States than Canada, requests for prayer space, ritual foot baths, and accommodation for religious holidays have become flashpoints of controversy. In Canada, media reports have highlighted requests by devout Muslim women students for women-only exercise rooms out of concern for the Islamic practice of modesty. Other reports have focused on the request of a visual arts student to be excused from participating in nude-model drawing which was in conflict with her religious belief and Islamic teaching. In this instance, the university refused an exemption. Earlier this year, a non-Muslim professor at McMaster University initiated a Hijab Day to draw attention to discrimination against Muslim women. The vandalizing of her office door with Islamophobic and sexist graffiti garnered national coverage.

Media attention on Muslim students can certainly play to popular stereotypes and intolerance. And devout Muslims are not the only students who pose questions about religious and cultural accommodation on university campuses. Evangelical Christian students have requested exemptions from reading literature on their syllabi that is sexually explicit or celebrates a sexual orientation they reject.

Are there limits to accommodation? At what point does respect for diversity and difference undermine academic freedom and integrity in university teaching and research? These are difficult questions with which academia now grapples. And, of course, the issue of accommodation is by no means limited to the world of universities.

As Roger Hutchinson notes in his contribution to this issue, what we are observing is that those with different religions and cultures, including those with no religious adherence, are now participating in a "shared, contested public realm" on university campuses and beyond.

It is also true, as he writes, that controversies over specific policies and the role and obligations of the public university are unlikely to diminish. The challenge and responsibility for academia is that this debate takes place in an environment of mutual respect and understanding. AM

Mark Rosenfeld is editor-in-chief of *Academic Matters* and associate executive director of OCUFA.

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