Laney Colloquium in Religion

Fall 2015

October 27
11:30 a.m.
Candler Library 212
Susan Hylen
Christian Women at the Crossroads: Forging Identity in the Multi-Cultural World of the Late Roman Empire

Join us for a lunchtime conversation with Susan Hylen on her new book. Light refreshments will be served, but please bring your own lunch. Spaces limited.

In *A Modest Apostle*, Susan Hylen uses Thecla as a microcosm from which to challenge this larger narrative. In contrast to previous interpreters, Hylen reads 1Timothy and the *ATH* as texts that emerge out of and share a common cultural framework. In the Roman period, women were widely expected to exhibit gendered virtues like modesty, industry, and loyalty to family. However, women pursued these virtues in remarkably different ways, including active leadership in their communities. Reading against a cultural background in which multiple and conflicting norms already existed for women's behavior, Hylen shows that texts like the *ATH* and 1Timothy begin to look different. Like the culture, 1Timothy affirms women's leadership as deacons and widows while upholding standards of modesty in dress and speech. In the *ATH*, Thecla's virtue is first established by her modest behavior, which allows her to emerge as a virtuous leader. The text presents Thecla as one who fulfills culturally established norms, even as she pursues a bold new way of life.

November 3
4:00 p.m.
Rita Ann Rollins Building, Pitts Library Lecture Hall 360
Dario Paulo Barrera Rivera
Religion De-regulated in a Global/Local World: Transfers, Fluidity and Instability in Latin America Pentecostalism

November 19
7:30 p.m.
Location TBD
Tomoko Masuzawa, author of *The Invention of World Religions*
Are We There Yet?: Ruminations on the Post-Secular

The very notion of “world” religions emerged in a complex context of imperialism, colonization, and the emergence of postcolonial sensibilities. The global phenomenon of religion, the problem of accounting for its variations, the relation among religions, and the genealogy of the privileged European religion of Christianity required new intellectual frameworks that confessional traditions did not provide. Masuzawa’s
insightful analysis of this process “reconstructs how religions came to be mapped in relation to supposedly scientific understandings of both racial and language categorizations” and in so doing constructs “a genealogy of the ‘forging of an enormous apparition: the essential identity of the West’” (Patrick Brantlinger).

November 4
11:30 a.m.
Rita Ann Rollins Building 102 (not confirmed)
Dario Paulo Barrera Rivera and Suma Ikeuchi, moderated by Dianne Stewart
Ethnographic Forum
Pentecostalism, Migration, and Conversion in (and beyond) Brazil: Two Case Studies

Two scholars of Latin American Pentecostalism discuss the ways in which Pentecostal religion in Brazil intersects with migration across national boundaries—in one case between Peru and Brazil and in the other between Japan and Brazil.

November 20
11:30 a.m.
Candler Library 212
Graduate Student Discussion with Tomoko Masuzawa

GDR students who have read The Invention of World Religions will be invited for conversation with Professor Masuzawa.

Previous Events

September 17
GDR Alumni/ae Presentation
5:15–7:15 p.m. (light dinner provided)
Candler Library 114
Abbas Barzegar, Associate Professor of Religion, Georgia State University
“The Aesthetics of Political Islam: From US Prisons to the Turkish-Syrian Frontier”

The subject of political Islam is often approached as epiphenomenal at best or a product of false consciousness at worst. Bargezar asks what a study of political Islam without pathology would look like? In America, between 1965 and 1985, African American Muslims embodied, embraced and developed Islam as a liberation theology that could break through the race frame of US society and the civil rights paradigm that sought to reform it. More recently, Muslim activists involved in humanitarian work in Turkey and Syria also have challenged dominant paradigms by redrawing boundaries of community away from the nation state and ethnic nationalism by appealing to a non-secular humanism. Despite the differences between these Muslim communities, and their challenges, both draw on shared visions of an alternative humanism that unfolds in the global arena of a postcolonial ideological competition. Moreover, their concepts of political community as modern practices of Islamic revival are often constructed through the themes of beauty, transcendence, and human fruition.
September 22
11:30 a.m.
Candler Library 212
Jim Hoesterey
Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, & a Self-Help Guru

Join us for a lunchtime conversation with Jim Hoesterey on his new book. Light refreshments will be served, but please bring your own lunch. Spaces limited.

Kyai Haji Abdullah Gymnastiar, known affectionately by Indonesians as "Aa Gym" (elder brother Gym), rose to fame via nationally televised sermons, best-selling books, and corporate training seminars. In Rebranding Islam James B. Hoesterey draws on two years' study of this charismatic leader and his message of Sufi ideas blended with Western pop psychology and management theory to examine new trends in the religious and economic desires of an aspiring middle class, the political predicaments bridging self and state, and the broader themes of religious authority, economic globalization, and the end(s) of political Islam.

October 8
6:00 p.m.
White Hall 208
Documentary Film Screening and Panel:
Yemanja: Wisdom from the African Heart of Brazil

This documentary film explores the relationship between environmental sustainability and the moral ecology undergirding the Candomblé tradition in Bahia, Brazil. It’s narrated by Alice Walker, the writer and activist well known to the Emory community. Yemanja reveals an often overlooked dimension of Candomblé, and indeed many other African heritage religions: the tradition’s reverence for nature manifested in its core ritual acts and social obligations. Candomblé custodians’ social struggles and triumphs are unveiled through the voices of elder female leaders, knowledge producers, and ritual experts of African descent. Yemanja’s producer and director, Donna Roberts and xxx xxx, well-known scholar of Condomblé, will join the GDR’s Dianne Stewart for a panel discussion following the screening of the film. In addition, photographs by the film’s videographer, Gerald Lee Hoffman, will be on display before the screening in the atrium of the Pitts Theology Library.

<seminars>
In the Classroom

The two seminars listed below intersect most directly with the LCR theme of Global Religious Circuits, but other seminars also feature units or topics that bear on this theme. Please consult the course atlas for details.

RLHT 735–Religion and Ecology: Transglobal and American Perspectives
Friday, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Bobbi Patterson

What do questions of sustainability have to do with ideas and practices of place? And what’s religion got to do with it? What do we mean when we say “place”? What religious, ecological, cultural and social dynamics constellate place—and how and why do they change? Do our connections and tensions with place reflect, confront and shape our religious, communal and ritual practices? Which American religious traditions provide history, information and models for noting, interacting with and transmuting place? What ethical and spiritual commitments are necessary for attention to, alliance with and/or rejection of place? Which commitments will we seriously consider for sustainability in our lives and communities?

RLR 700–Topics in Religion: Transnational Religion
Tuesday, 1:00–4:00 p.m.
Jim Hoesterey

Every religion is a global religion. In this seminar we will explore the religious, political, economic, and social transformations that occur when religious texts, traditions, and people travel across local, national and regional borders. This seminar will cover multiple religious traditions including Islam, Buddhism and Christianity. Seminar readings will explore theories of mobility, modernity, mimicry, translation, subjectivity, postcolonial studies and more.