

March 1, 2002

Dear Religious Studies Majors and Minors,

We are on the brink of yet another registration period and so I want to send to you the following list of courses that the Department will be offering in the coming interim and summer sessions, as well as the Fall 2002 schedule of courses. Please remember that, for many of you, your registration materials will soon arrive in the Department's main office. As of this registration period I hope to see a new advising system established whereby students will be assigned to a specific advisor throughout the duration of their degree. As you may already know, you cannot register until you have received advising, so please notify **Betty Dickey** once you have been advised, so that she can clear the way for you to register on line. If you receive your primary advising in another Department (e.g., if you are a double major or a minor), it is still a good idea to stop by our Department to discuss your program of study with one of the professors.

You may notice a few things about the Fall class schedule. First, Professor **Catherine Roach** will not be offering a course because she has received reassigned time in the Fall (time shifted from teaching duties to research) to carry out further research and writing on her next book. She will be presenting an early part of the book at a conference in Atlanta in mid-March. Also, the Department has hired a new person, Dr. **Timothy Murphy**, who will begin teaching this Fall with two sections of Rel 100. He received his Ph.D. from the University of California (Santa Cruz) in 1997, held the prestigious Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and has just published his first book. Tim's specialty is the work of Nietzsche, semiotics (theory of signs and symbolism), and hermeneutics (theories of interpretation), and he works on Lakota religion and various aspects of Christian history. The Department had over 60 applications for this one opening, confirming for us that the University of Alabama can compete with the best programs to attract first rate scholars.

In our ongoing effort to bring some new faces to campus, and to build bridges with colleagues on campus also conducting research on religion, the Department has three public events planned for this semester:

- Professor **Julie Ingersoll** of the Department of Philosophy, University of North Florida, will deliver a "Religion in Culture" lecture on Monday, May 11, at 3:30 in Smith Hall 205, entitled, "War Stories: Gender Conflict in Conservative American Protestantism." Trained at the University of California at Santa Barbara, Prof. Ingersoll studies the sociology of religion and religion in the U.S.
- Professor **Marysia Galbraith**, of our own campus's New College and the Department of Anthropology, will also deliver a "Religion in Culture" lecture, during Honors Week, on Monday, April 8 at 3:00 in Smith Hall 205. Her title is, "On the Road to Czestochowa: Rhetoric and Experience on a Polish Pilgrimage." Prof. Galbraith's primary area of study is post-communist Poland, where she examines young Poles' (now in their mid-twenties) experiences of national identity and democratization. She will lecture on the ways in which pilgrimage can function as a realm for both constituting and contesting religious communities.
- Finally, on behalf of the Dean of Arts & Sciences the Department is organizing the visit of Professor **Bruce Lawrence**, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Duke University, and nationally known scholar of Islam and religious fundamentalism. At 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 30, Prof. Lawrence will deliver a public lecture, to be held in the Ferguson theater, entitled "Conjuring with Islam: Who Speaks for Muslims After September 11?" The author of several books, Professor Lawrence's most recent major work is *Shattering the Myth: Islam Beyond Violence* (Princeton University Press, 2000).

If you are a graduating senior, congratulations! Please be sure to let **Betty** know that you are graduating, so that we can keep our records up to date. Also, if you require assistance to clarify for the College of Arts & Sciences Registrar's office how you have met the requirements for the REL major, please contact the Department as soon as possible. Because we want to stay in touch with you, and learn of your future successes, please ensure that we have your mailing address and/or your email address. In fact, we would like to have email addresses for all current majors/minors, so please ensure that **Betty** has your current address. For those returning in the Fall, please keep in mind the "Welcome Back" event that we've started holding early in the Fall semester.

With Honors Week quickly approaching, I'm pleased to announce this year's recipients of the Goodwyn Endowed Scholarship as well as those recognized for excellence in the study of religion. They are: **Clay Arnold** and **Jeremy Privett** (Goodwyn Award recipients) and **Kathleen Penton** and **Nicholas Reagan** (each recognized for Excellence in the Study of Religion). All four will receive their plaques at the College of Arts & Sciences Honors Convocation in mid-April. Please keep in mind that the Department will also be hosting an Honors Reception that week (time to be announced).

Finally, as some of you may know, Professor **Kurtis Schaeffer**, and his wife **Heather**, now have a new roommate: their daughter **Ruby** was born on February 13 (the Tibetan New Year, no less), weighing in at a healthy 7 lbs 12 oz. Although Kurtis is consuming a wee bit more coffee in the mornings these days, he seems to be adjusting rather well to his new role. Congratulations Kurtis and Heather (and Ruby).

I hope your semester is going well and that your plans for future classes, work, or continued graduate studies are coming together nicely.

Russell McCutcheon
Chair, Department of Religious Studies