Greetings! I am delighted to bring you up to speed on what’s been happening at the IU Consortium for the Study of Religion, Ethics, and Society (CSRES). Our newsletter gives you some highlights. You can take a deeper dive into our activities and initiatives through our website.

In 2016, we launched the Religion and Ethics Seminars, a series of faculty-led, yearlong seminars running concurrently throughout the IU system. To date, we have hosted fourteen seminars, many of which are well into their second year of activity. The breadth of the topics covered and the uses to which the seminars have been put has been impressive. In any given month, groups have gathered to discuss topics like environmental justice, Islam in the public sphere, normative aspects of public art, sustainable business practices, spirituality in health care, and values in children’s literature. Seminars have hosted notable scholars and leaders for public talks, engaged students on ethical questions in small group settings, held community events on local matters of public importance, and developed working groups to incubate new scholarly research. You’ll find a full listing of current and recent Religion and Ethics Seminars on page 2. The next deadline for applications will be October 10th.

We’re also engaged in a number of thematic initiatives. This fall we continue our ongoing series of scholarly takes on the relationship between religion and American electoral politics. We’ve developed a rich collection of local and national resources as part of our Religion & Racial Reconciliation, Inclusion, and Justice initiative, and we hosted a compelling event on race relations and activism after Charlottesville. In conjunction with the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, we are hosting three public forums related to religious freedom in Indiana. This fall, we launch a yearlong set of public events that probe the ethical issues related to life in the information age.

In the spring, the Consortium will host an international conference on spirituality. While “spirituality” typically connotes the personal pursuit of meaning and transcendence, the gathered scholars from IU and around the world will discuss the social dimensions and implications of spirituality. The conference kicks off with a public talk about spirituality among contemporary college students.

We continue to host stand-alone events on matters of public importance, such as last year’s talk about immigration and the “new sanctuary movement.” Drop me a line if you have ideas for an event.

Stay tuned for our ongoing events announcements and peruse our website for more information than we can fit within these pages.

With best wishes for the new academic year,

Brian Steensland
Director

Executive Committee: Brian Steensland, Aaron Stalnaker, Andrea Jain, Asma Afsaruddin, Jamie Prenkert, Phil Goff

Administrator: Alicia MacDonald
“Within the Indiana University faculty there is tremendous expertise on topics relating to religion, ethics, and values. We have world-renowned scholars but they are spread across fields and campuses. The Religion and Ethics Seminars program is a big step in bringing these minds together.”

– Brian Steensland, IU NEWSROOM

CURRENT AND UPCOMING SEMINARS

Economic Justice: The Ethics of Doing Business with the Poor

**Kelly Eskew, IUB**  **Daniel Preston, IUB**

The Ethical Dimensions of Children’s Literature

**Heather Blair, IUB**  **Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, IUE**

**Megan Musgrave, IUPUI**

The Ethics, Values, and Practices of Public Art in Urban Contexts

**Jason Kelly, IUPUI**  **Pamela Napier, IUPUI**

Global and Comparative Approaches to Religion, Ethics, and Political Theory

**Hussein Banai, IUB**  **Aaron Dean Stalnaker, IUB**

**HIP 2.0: Health Equity, Responsibility, and Community**

**David Craig, IUPUI**  **Amber Comer, IUPUI**

Islam in the Global Sphere

**Asma Afsaruddin, IUB**  **Abdulkader Sinno, IUB**

Mounds of the Midwest

**Kelly Hayes, IUPUI**  **Charmayne Champion-Shaw, IUPUI**

Sustainable Leadership and Governance

**Steven Kreft, IUB**  **Julie Manning Magid, IUPUI**  **Kelly Eskew, IUB**

Those Who Know the Trouble I’ve Seen: Citizenship and Resistance in African American Christian Communities

**Amanda Friesen, IUPUI**

**Joseph Tucker Edmonds, IUPUI**
PAST SEMINARS

The Environment and Society: Ethical Foundations for a Sustainable Future
Zachary Schrank, IUSB   April Lidinsky IUSB

Religion, Spirituality, Healthcare, and Ethics
Amber Comer, IUPUI   Alexia Torke, IU School of Medicine

Environmental Justice
Gabriel Filippelli, IUPUI
Carlton M. Waterhouse, IU McKinney School of Law

Information, Ethics, and Sociocultural Values
Ronald Day, IUB   Nazareth Pantaloni, IUB

Moral Thinking in Artworks of Economic Success and Economic Failure
Andrew Kopec, IPFW   Stephen Buttes, IPFW

SEMINAR HIGHLIGHTS

James Rebanks
A Shepherds’ Perspective: Stewardship and Ethics
This event brought to South Bend the internationally renowned British author, James Rebanks, whose 2017 best seller, The Shepherd's Life: Modern Dispatches from an Ancient Landscape, grew out of the vast popularity of his Twitter account. It was a conversation, with questions posed by IU South Bend English Professor Ken Smith and the audience. The evening concluded with a reception and a book signing.

Hosted by the Environment and Society: Ethical Foundations for the Future seminar

Christopher Bail
Terrified: How Anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations became Mainstream
Bail traced how the anti-Muslim narrative of the political fringe has captivated large segments of the American media, government, and general public, validating the views of extremists who argue that the United States is at war with Islam and marginalizing mainstream Muslim-Americans who are uniquely positioned to discredit such claims.

“We exceeded our own expectations. We helped shape discourse on civility and discrimination by bringing in Chris Bail.” –Islam in the American Sphere seminar

Hosted by the Islam in the American Public Sphere seminar
Impact Investing

John Duong & Holiday Hart McKiernan, Lumina Foundation
The Economic Justice seminar partnered with the IU NetImpact and Trockman Microfinance Initiative student groups for all their Fall 2017 events which increased attendance immensely. This event was also featured in the Kelley Institute for Social Impact’s (KISI) Social Impact Month in October and ended up being standing room only.

Hosted by the Economic Justice and Inclusive Markets: The Ethics of Doing Business with the Poor seminar

Picturing Religion: Comic Books and Picture Books

Daniel Peretti, IUB & Heather Blair, IUB

A faculty member and an alumnum gave presentations on their research in a special public session of John Walsh’s graduate course, “Seminar on Literature for Youth: Comic Books and Graphic Novels”. A question-and-answer session with refreshments followed.

“We definitely succeeded in our initial aim: we introduced researchers to one another in the field of children’s and youth literature across IU campuses. We had participants from multiple schools and programs, and from three campuses.” – Religious and Ethical Dimensions of Children’s Literature seminar

Hosted by the Religious and Ethical Dimensions of Children’s Literature seminar

What is Public Art?

Julia Muney Moore
Meredith Brickell
Fiona McDonald

Cities across the US are grappling with major transformations that expose the many tensions inherent to historical disparities in economics, education, safety, and political access brought on by inequalities based in race and class. Midwest cities have responded to these challenges with a variety of approaches. This seminar series is concerned with addressing one of them: the role of culture in reshaping cities – specifically through public art.

Hosted by the Ethics, Values, and Practices of Public Art in Urban Contexts
RELIGION & RACIAL RECONCILIATION, INCLUSION AND JUSTICE (RRRIJ)

The Consortium seeks to (1) develop and support a durable network of people and organizations on the IUPUI campus within the local community with interests in religion, race, reconciliation and justice, and (2) facilitate action on issues relating to racial reconciliation and justice at the local level.

Resources Page

We created a resource on the CSRES website that highlights the many groups and organizations working to advance racial reconciliation, inclusion, and justice. The resources are grouped into 4 sections: Indianapolis, National, Midwest, and Further Resources. Each organization or group listed has a link to their website and an explanation of their mission. These resources are detailed and have received positive feedback from the academic community.

Event

From Ferguson to Charlottesville: Standing at the Crossroads of Faith and Justice, with guest lecturer Leah Gunning Francis, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Christian Education and Practical Theology at Christian Theological Seminary.

We partnered with the IUPUI Multicultural Center and the IUPUI Africana Studies program for Dr. Francis’s talk. The event brought in over 100 attendees including students, faculty, and staff. Dr. Francis had a very engaging Q & A session following the talk with interested students.

Thematically Linked Religion & Ethics Seminars

Islam in the American Public Sphere, Islam in the Global Sphere, Mounds of the Midwest, and Those Who Know the Trouble I’ve Seen: Citizenship and Resistance in the African American Community.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SERIES

We co-sponsored the Religious Freedom series with The Center for the Study of Religion & American Culture.

Events


Religious Freedom II panel discussion featured representatives of minority religions in a conversation about the virtues and limits of religious freedom.

Religious Freedom III (forthcoming) panel discussion being held this fall will discuss Indiana’s HB 1024, a law passed in 2017 that protects students’ rights to religious expression and also encourages the development of elective high school courses on world religions.
ETHICS IN THE INFORMATION AGE

What are the ethical and social implications of contemporary developments in information technology? This 2018-19 event series draws together scholars from Indiana University and nationally to explore this question. The aim is to foster insights through interdisciplinary dialogue, explore potential for scholarly collaboration, and generate student engagement on topics of clear relevance to us all. Organized by Fabio Rojas (Sociology, IUB), Joseph Tomain (Maurer School of Law, IUB), Angie Raymond (Business Law and Ethics, IUB), and Scott James Shackelford (Business Law and Ethics, IUB).

Preview of Upcoming Topics and Speakers

5 Reasons Why Social Networks Make Us Vulnerable to Misinformation with Fil Menczer; Computer Science and Informatics, IUB

Ethics of AI with Don Howard; Philosophy, University of Notre Dame

The Future of Privacy in the Digital Age with Fred Cate; Vice President of Research at IU and Paul Schwartz; Co-director Berkeley Center for Law and Technology

Government Surveillance: A Roundtable Discussion about Occurrences, Impacts, and Governance with Margaret Hu; Law, Washington and Lee University, Jessica Eaglin; Law, IUB, and Angie Raymond; Business Law and Ethics, IUB

DNA: Law, Technology, and Ethics, more details to come

GUEST SPEAKERS

Nader Hasemi

The 2016 US Presidential Election and the Muslim Question

In the months preceding the 2016 presidential election, Muslims became a relevant swing group in deciding the future of the nation. Middle Eastern relations, Islamophobia and inflammatory political rhetoric spawned debates: What role does Islam have in America today? Hashemi explained how the Western perception of Islam arose through analysis of historical and political events to emphasize the need to combat Islamophobia and overcome religious discrimination.

"Why are fundamental acts of violence immediately associated with Islam and Muslims, but not acts of generosity?" -Hashemi
Alan Cooperman

Religion, Politics, and the 2016 Presidential Election

Cooperman (director of religion research at the PEW Research Center) discussed what role religion would possibly play in the 2016 Presidential election. Voting blocs that pitted Catholics against Protestants in the 1960s have shifted to pit religious conservative against religious liberals and frequent church attenders against non-attenders. In recent years, attention has focused on two groups: evangelical Protestants and religious “nones” (those with no religious affiliation), each of whom constitute around 25 percent of the American population. Co-sponsored with the Center for Religion & American Culture and the Lake Institute for Faith and Giving

Kraig Beyerlein

Social Justice in the Desert: Faith Based Mobilizing to Save Lives along the Arizona-Sonora Border

Beyerlein’s talk provided a more nuanced understanding of how congregations support social action, describing how congregations were both infrastructures and recruitment sites for life-saving efforts in the desert. It explained how the resources of congregations became activated for humanitarian efforts for undocumented border crossers through both clergy-led and laity-led processes. Because this activation was internally-driven, Beyerlein provided an alternative to “co-optation” models in which religious organizations are generally viewed as passive actors that must be pulled into action by external forces.

Wendy Cadge

God Around the Edges? Moral Frameworks in times of Crisis

Cadge discussed her book-in-progress on religion and spirituality in public places and institutions: deep-sea ports, container ships, airports, halls of Congress. In a time when many people see a decreasing role of religion in public life, she finds it in many unexpected places. Cadge is an ethnographer who studies the intersections of religion with immigration, sexuality, and health care.

UPCOMING Andrew Whitehead

Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States

FRIDAY OCTOBER 5th @ 10:30 AM, IUPUI Campus Center, 305

In order to understand the societal implications of religion, we must account for the degree to which Americans imagine a central role for religion—Christianity in particular—in the public sphere, and how that vision shapes their values, group boundaries, moral certitude, and subsequent decisions. Drawing on a variety of data sources, Whitehead will show that the extent to which Americans envision Christianity as infusing all aspects of American culture and social life helps explain the polarization we see across many social issues. To make sense of our current social and political climate and find a way forward together, social scientists, religious leaders, engaged citizens, and policy makers must attend to the degree to which their fellow Americans embrace Christian nationalism. Co-sponsored by The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture.
Contemporary interest in spirituality is on the rise, including the growth of scholarly attention to the “spiritual but not religious,” popular interest in yoga, meditation, and other spiritual practices, and positive appraisals of the connection between spirituality and wellbeing. In the background is the widespread view (in the modern West) that religion and spirituality are distinct and separable, that institutional religion is being supplanted by individuated spirituality, and that spirituality may be best conceived through a predominantly psychological or therapeutic lens.

Our conference seeks to challenge and expand facets of this widespread view. It brings together analyses of contemporary spirituality that examine the social factors that shape the understanding and experience of spirituality in both scholarship and everyday life.

The conference has three organizing themes: cutting-edge work that advances theory and method in conceptualizing the social dimensions of spirituality; international and interreligious comparisons that demonstrate how factors such as national context, religious traditions, and secularism shape spirituality; and examinations of spirituality in public life that explore how spirituality is shaped by political, cultural, legal, and economic factors. Most broadly, we will highlight the ways in which spirituality is eminently social.
MEDIA

• **Professor challenges assumptions about Islam** - Indiana Daily Student article covering Nader Hashemi’s CSRES funded lecture on The Presidential Election and the Muslim Question

• **New seminar talks religion and ethics in turbulent times** - Indiana Daily Student article on the Religion and Ethics Seminar Series

• **IU consortium creates new seminar series on religion and ethics** - IU Communications article on the Religion and Ethics Seminar Series

• **New Faculty-Led Seminar Series** - Endeavors write up on the Moral Thinking in Artworks of Economic Success and Economic Failure Seminar

• **IU author’s lecture begins new seminar series** - Indiana Daily Student highlighting the Islam in the American Public Sphere Seminar Series

• **Black Leaders Raising Voices on Environmental Justice** - Indianapolis Recorder article promoting the first Environmental Justice Seminar event

• **Scholar who has chronicled emergence of anti-Muslim groups to speak at IU** - IU Communications promotes talk on anti-Islamic sentiment by Christopher Bail, which is part of the Islam in the American Public Sphere seminar series

• **Christopher Bail talks about the rise of anti-Muslim sentiments** - Indiana Daily Student coverage on second lecture in the Islam in the American Public Sphere seminar series

FIND US

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