

ILLUMINATIONS

Introducing... Professor Elizabeth Antus!



Congratulations on becoming our new Contemporary Catholic Theology professor at John Carroll University, and welcome!

A little bit about Professor Antus

Professor Antus has bounced back and forth between the east coast and the Midwest, and will be arriving at the north coast to start her new position with JCU. Born and raised among the civil war battlefields in Virginia, Antus knew by the age of 12 that she planned to get her PhD, though she initially thought she would specialize in the field of English literature. Her plan began with a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Studies and English from the University of Virginia. Though she maintained her passion for literature, she headed west to the cornfields of South Bend, Indiana, to pursue a master's degree and then a doctoral degree in Systematic Theology at the University of Notre Dame. She has been teaching as a part-time professor at Boston College for the last couple of years, and this summer, she will be defending her dissertation entitled "The Doors of the Soul: A Critical Augustinian Account of Self-Love."

Why theology?

Professor Antus chose to pursue higher education in theology instead of literature because in theology, one has the space to ask the deep, meaningful questions: "Who is God?"; "Why are we here?"; "Is there a reason for suffering?" Antus found a community in the Theology Department at Notre Dame with whom she could examine those big questions. Influenced by her mother who pursued a master's degree in Theology while Antus was growing up, she found her own theological voice in the academic community as a student and now as a teacher. Antus finds fulfillment in seeing her students connect the lessons she offers inside the classroom with their lives outside the classroom. According to Antus, the classroom is a powerful forum where students learn to apply theology to critical issues of gender, violence, sexuality and body image.

Awareness of the importance of self-love and positive body image

Looking at the title of her dissertation, one can deduce that an important area of interest for Antus is self-love and body image. She is open to bringing awareness of this issue to the students on JCU's campus through panel discussions and other events designed to raise consciousness. Antus has seen how poor body image and low self-esteem can be at odds with God's plan for us, a plan to flourish and to be filled with joy. While it is important to articulate a balance between pride and self-love, in Antus' experience, people don't necessarily seem to know the importance of cultivating the latter. [Continued...](#)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Interview with Incoming Professor Elizabeth Antus
- Graduating Students
- Dr. Joan Nuth's Retirement from TRS Department
- Faculty News
- Plan Your Courses for Summer and Fall 2015
- Dates to Remember

Professor Antus (continued)

What are the most important topics in your field today?

For Antus, the relationship between salvation and liberation in this life is a contested issue in Catholic theology, and one that Pope Francis has also discussed. With the pope's emphasis on helping the poor, Catholics are called with even greater urgency today to proclaim that the good news of salvation is not simply an "otherworldly" promise, but something that demands care and justice on behalf of the oppressed in the here and now. Another important—and related—theological topic, according to Antus, is the question of where theology happens: how can the Catholic Church come to recognize the theological authority of the oppressed and the marginalized, those who are struggling under conditions of poverty, people of color, women, and LGBT people? As a theological anthropologist, Antus sees the value in listening to people's stories. Especially where those voices have been under-represented historically, it is critical to listen to where people find God's presence in the world. Ultimately, the question is who gets to claim theological authority, and whether those in power in the Catholic Church will have ears to hear those voices.

How can the Catholic Church come to recognize the theological authority of the oppressed and the marginalized, those who are struggling under conditions of poverty, people of color, women, and LGBT people?

New graduate classes offered within your first couple of years here?

Besides Systematic Theology, a required graduate level course, Antus would like to offer a class on Christian approaches to the problem of suffering. Another class would examine the meaning of the resurrection of the body, throughout the Christian tradition and now in contemporary Catholic theology. Students should also look for a course on theology from women's perspectives, which would include feminist and womanist perspectives as well as those from Asian and Latina women. Antus could also teach a class on the Trinity and one that focuses on the body through the lens of people experiencing physical and intellectual disabilities.

After spending many years surrounded by the cornfields of South Bend, and most recently the hustle and bustle of part-time teaching in snowy Boston, Professor Antus is excited about her upcoming move to Cleveland. She feels that the JCU position is a good fit for her and is looking forward to finding housing in a charming neighborhood and a welcoming Catholic worship community. We wish you the best of luck in the defense of your dissertation in July and look forward to seeing you on campus in August!

Congratulations and Farewell to our graduating students!

For three of our graduate assistants and several more graduate students, the end is in sight! As they prepare for graduation, each is in the process of deciding what comes next. We wish them well. Virginia Phillips and Patrick Sullivan will be graduating in May. Amy McKenna, Joy Parker and Matthew Michaels plan to graduate in August. Jerry Andrews received his diploma in January.

Virginia Phillips will be returning to the DC area to pursue teaching opportunities there. She is also continuing to help the School of the Medes, in Northern Iraq, find American teachers willing to work overseas, especially at a new school opened to serve the needs of a Yezidi refugee camp outside of Duhok, Iraq. She is looking forward to being back in her hometown with family and friends, and hopes to continue writing in the theology and religious studies field.



Farewell to our graduating students!



Joy Parker entered grad school more for the process than for the product, and she has appreciated studying under so many excellent faculty with their various disciplines and dispositions. It has also been a ton of fun to share this stretch of the journey with fellow grad students and graduate assistants. Upon graduation, Joy plans to return to her post in music and worship leadership at Brecksville United Methodist Church, while remaining open and imaginative about where the road might lead her.

Matthew Michaels will be finishing his master's essay over the course of the summer, but once spring semester is past, he'll be either working or looking for a job. He's been focusing on entry-level positions in business, and he's also been considering work in teaching and non-profits. One of Matthew's favorite memories from the program actually occurred before he officially started his coursework. He was sitting in on the systematic theology class taught by Dr. Nuth in the spring of 2013, and he remembers feeling so excited about what were to him brand new methods of doing theology. The class sparked a revolution in the way that he thought about the world, which has continually been developed through the myriad experiences he's had both in and outside the classroom.



Amy McKenna will continue her work as a spiritual director with individuals at River's Edge, JCU, and the SPA program at St. Ignatius. She will also be involved in leading a retreat called Living Prayer at the Jesuit Retreat House. After going through the ISI program, and developing a thirst to know more, Amy decided to get her master's degree in theology in order to explore the meaning behind the prayers she uses, and to learn about the saints she prays with. Her years in the graduate program have been the best years of her life as she has enjoyed the intellectual stimulation, discussing theology issues and grappling with the big questions with the community of grad students at JCU. She loves and appreciates her teachers and will miss them, but not the papers and tests! Amy has learned that it is great to ask questions, and it is okay not to know all the answers. In fact, if you want your faith to be strong, you better question it.

Patrick Sullivan began the program here in hopes to (1) subject what had become of his theology to minds greater than his own and so to grow; and (2) perhaps identify the most appropriate ways by which to make of his theology a useful contribution to the world around him. The first goal was met in every class he took. His professors and fellow students, graduate and undergraduate alike, presented challenges, and opportunities to grow, and he says he is the better for having gone through it. The second goal will only be able to be assessed after he finishes his final essay and oral comps, in which he is now immersed. (no photo available)

Since receiving his diploma in January, **Jerry Andrews** has been working hard on writing curriculum for a music and theology class he'd like to teach. He hopes to teach Adult Ed for the United Church of Christ, and is considering self-publishing his liturgical music. One of his compositions was being used by a church on the Internet. Jerry fondly remembers sparring with Dr. Spencer. During a class presentation on Mark, his classmate mentioned the prayer of Jesus was not in it. Jerry asked his classmate, "Are you telling us that Mark doesn't have a prayer?" In less than a nano-second, Dr. Spencer stood, pointed to me, and shot back, "and neither do you!" I had been bested by the best! (no photo available)

Dr. Nuth's So-called "Retirement"

At the end of this semester, Dr. Joan Nuth will be retiring, but not entirely! She will be retiring from departmental meetings and from turning in grades, but she will not be retiring her red pen (she actually uses a plain pencil). Dr. Nuth will be retiring from being pulled in two directions, and now will be able to focus on one mission only. Dr. Nuth is retiring from the TRS Department in order to concentrate all of her energy on the Ignatian Spirituality Institute (ISI).



Dr. Nuth has always loved learning — learning everything, even algebra and chemistry! She has enjoyed teaching at John Carroll since 1987. In fact, everything she experienced and learned during those many years has provided a firm foundation for what she will continue to do in the future. And she wouldn't trade those many years for the world. But now it is time to move on — into a more concentrated focus on developing the ISI. In 2003, Dr. Nuth established the ISI after the Jesuit Detroit Provincial indicated a need for a training program for spiritual directors in Northeast Ohio. Since then, Dr. Nuth has split her time between teaching for the TRS Department and recruiting ISI candidates, teaching the ISI courses, supervising the students through their practicums, and certifying new spiritual directors.

Comparing teaching college students with ISI students, Dr. Nuth explained that the difference is mainly one of focus. For college students, the focus is on academics and preparation for a future profession. For ISI students, who are generally older and established in their careers, the coursework is still academically rigorous, but the focus is on laying the theological foundation necessary to prepare specifically for the ministry of spiritual direction. According to Nuth, the ISI has been an addition to the TRS Department, with which it is affiliated, in the sense that it has added a pastoral focus to the Department's curriculum, and she hopes that affiliation will continue. Over the last decade, the ISI has developed into so much more than she anticipated when it began. She is delighted with the community of ISI grads and their continued bonding, as many of them work together in various ministries. With an alumnae/i group of over 110 certified spiritual directors, Dr. Nuth is planning to develop continuing education workshops or mini-courses in theology, scripture and spirituality, in order to nurture and support the growing community of ISI graduates in their ministry.

Dr. Nuth will miss the regular interaction with her colleagues and JCU students. Her advice to JCU college students is to take advantage of all that the University and the TRS Department have to offer; enjoy every moment of it because you may not have time to explore academic pursuits after you graduate. Our advice to Dr. Nuth is "Don't be a stranger! Come on up and see us sometime." And don't worry about the ducks!

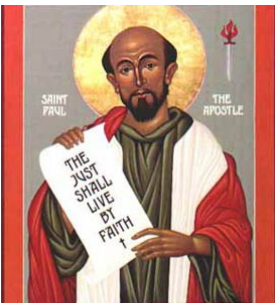


PS: If you're wondering about the ducks, just ask Dr. Nuth!

Upcoming Courses Summer 2015:

TRS 529: Early Christian Theology & Liturgy—MTWRF, 8:15-12:30, May 11-22 (Dr. Kelly):

Christian beliefs influence worship, and worship influences belief. Explore this truism by focusing on early Christian liturgy, including prayers, music, art and ceremonies, and learn how these liturgical experiences related to developing Christian theology. Examine the effect that Jewish and Greco-Roman influences had on the development of distinctly “Christian” rituals, liturgies, and Christology in both Scripture and culture, and how these relate to modern worship practices.



TRS 509: Teaching Romans by Simulation—Wednesdays (new day!) 9:00am-5:00pm, June 15– July 16 (Dr. McGinn): Take an *EXPERIENTIAL* dive into Paul’s letter to the Romans, which leads the collection of his letters, both in the New Testament and in its significance for Christian tradition. Are you intimidated by Paul’s dense theological arguments? This “live action role-play” approach to Romans allows students to dig deeply into the letter’s contents without getting overwhelmed by historical details or theological jargon. Gain a deep understanding of Paul’s most influential letter by entering into the experiences of Roman Christians in the late 50s who belonged to these influential, early house churches.

Upcoming Courses Fall 2015:

TRS 529: The Feast of Christmas—Mondays, 6:30-9:15pm (Dr. Kelly): The feast of Christmas developed in the Christian Church over the course of the first six centuries of the Christian era. Examine elements of the Catholic tradition in the historical development of Christmas using music, literature, film, and class discussions and lectures, and gain a better understand the feast of Christmas.



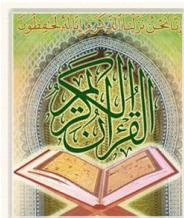
TRS 400: Engaging Biblical Scriptures—Intro to Biblical Interpretation—Tuesday, 6:30-9:15pm

(Dr. McGinn): This Introduction to scholarly approaches will help you understand the Bible by exploring exegesis, interpretation, and contemporary application of scriptural texts. Focus on the canonicity and the authority of scripture; authenticity, pseudonymity, epistolography; and the methods of form criticism, source criticism, literary and rhetorical criticism, reader-response criticism, textual criticism, redaction history, social history, feminist hermeneutics, queer theory, and theological reflection. Learn how to apply these methods to biblical interpretation, with various biblical texts providing the “case studies” for discussion.

NB: This course is required of all students, ideally taken during the first semester of coursework.

TRS 539: What Happened at Vatican II? —Wednesdays, 6:30-9:15pm (Dr. Hahenberg):

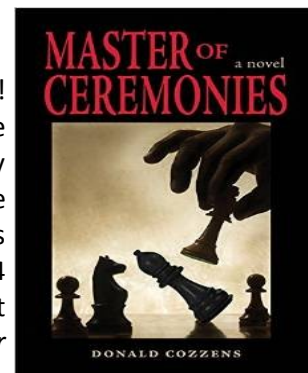
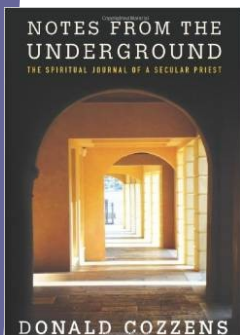
The influence of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) is still felt in virtually every area of Catholic life. Examine the Second Vatican Council as a historical, sociological, and theological event. Explore what happened at Vatican II—paying particular attention to both the causes and the effects of the council in the life of the Roman Catholic Church.



TRS 544: Islamic Spirituality—Thursdays, 6:30-9:15pm (Dr. Saritoprak): Discover one of the most important and least known aspects of Islam – its spiritual dimension – in this course designed to elaborate on the Sufi spiritual tradition of Islam. A verse in the Qur'an provides the foundation for the mystical tradition of Islam: “Only in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest” (Q13:28). Explore the following themes: the emergence of Islamic spirituality through the Qur'an and hadith (sayings of the Prophet) and the lives and examples of well-known mystics in the Islamic tradition. **NB: This course meets the world religion requirement.**

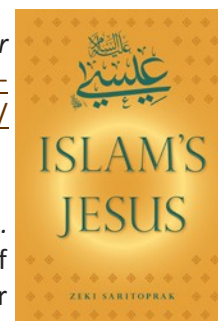
Faculty news

Our writer in residence, **Fr. Don Cozzens**, has just published his first novel! Cozzens, a critically-acclaimed author, takes his readers behind the scenes of the Roman Catholic Church for an unflinching look at clergy sexual abuse and its very personal consequences. *Master of Ceremonies* was a finalist for the 2014 INDIEFAB Book of the Year Award by "Foreword Reviews" and is available in hardcover or paperback. Fr. Cozzens also received a 2014 Catholic Press Association in Pastoral Ministry award for his recent book *Notes from the Underground: The Spiritual Journal of a Secular Priest*. In this book that arrived just in time for the papacy of Francis, Cozzens issues a call for a gospel-based Catholic church that is closer in spirit to Yves Congar and Teilhard de Chardin, to Dorothy Day and Mother Teresa.



Just last month, **Dr. Zeki Saritoprak** was interviewed by *Today's Zaman* regarding ISIS and Islamic theology. You can find the interview here: (<http://www.todayzaman.com/interviewsprofessor-saritoprak-isis-uses-eschatological-themes-extensively-for-their-ideology-374099.html>). In the article, Dr. Saritoprak explains "ISIS preaches hatred and contempt for human life. Nowhere are these parts of anything that could be remotely described as the Prophetic methodology, and their killings and brutal treatment of other Muslims, Christians, Jews and others show that their methods are truly illegitimate."

His recent book *Islam's Jesus* was the topic of two interviews: one in the *Catholic Register* (<http://www.catholicregister.org/arts/item/18919-jesus-is-a-point-where-christians-muslims-can-meet>) and one in the *Vancouver Courier* (<http://www.vancourier.com/community/pacific-spirit-common-ground-with-muslim-jesus-1.1663562>)



In addition, Dr. Saritoprak recently had an article published in *Islam and Citizenship Education*. The article is called "Migration, Feelings of Belonging to the Land, and the Universality of Islam." The periodical is edited by Ednan Aslan and Marcia Hermansen (Wisebaden: Springer VS, 2015) and the article is on pages 45-54.

Dr. Joe Kelly is keeping busy giving lectures on "Religion in Colonial America" for the Senior Scholars program at Case Western Reserve University. The series is part of the Life Long Learning Program.

Other Department News and Celebrations

*At the **Celebration Of Scholarship**, John Barrett, Matthew Michaels, Joy Parker and Michael Younes presented research papers to an appreciative audience. Congratulations to our TRS Scholars! And congratulations again to John Barrett who won the Beaudry Award for embracing the ideals of a Jesuit Education in terms of leadership, academic excellence, commitment to Christian values and service. John is in our combined BA/MA program.

*Dr. McGinn and the department survived their **Academic Program Review!** The TRS department underwent a very comprehensive review by outside and in-house reviewers during the past several months. Although the final results aren't in yet, the feedback from the site visitors was incredibly positive, including a "gold standard" for peer evaluation of teachers! The APR board agreed with TRS's assessment that additional full-time teachers should be added to the department in order to meet the academic needs of JCU students, and that the offices located on the upper floor are in serious need of cosmetic upgrading.

SPRING 2015

The Department of Theology
and Religious Studies
at John Carroll University

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies, with roots in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition, shares the mission of John Carroll University to reflect the value system of the Gospels. In particular, the Jesuit spirit brings to education a rationality balanced by human affection, an esteem for the individual as a unique person, training in discerning choice, openness to change, and a quest for God's greater glory in the use of the world's goods. The department offers courses that span a wide range of theological and religious thought and provide a context for ecumenical dialogue and study.

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Check us out on the web:

www.jcu.edu/religion

Dates to Remember

Summer 2015 Registration:

- ◆ Ongoing

Fall 2015 Registration:

- ◆ Ongoing

Due Dates for Summer Graduation

- ◆ **July 27, 2015:** Thesis, essay, or project deadline.
- ◆ **August 3, 2015:** Comps deadline

Due Dates for Winter Graduation

- ◆ **July 13, 2015:** Application Deadline
- ◆ **November 16, 2015:** Thesis, essay, or project deadline
- ◆ **November 23, 2015:** Comps deadline

Don't miss it!

This spring, the Department of Theology and Religious studies is hosting "**Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933–1945**," a traveling exhibition on loan from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This exhibition traces the sinister path from prejudice to persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany. All are welcomed to visit the exhibition free of charge, and instructors and campus groups are encouraged to arrange special tours of the exhibition (contact information below). The exhibition will be housed in the O'Dea Room of the D. J. Lombardo Student Center from now through May 1st. **Regular Public Hours:** Sundays, 1–5 p.m., Thursdays, 4–7 p.m.

On Display through May 1st

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's exhibitions program is supported in part by the Lester Robbins and Sheila Johnson Robbins Traveling Special Exhibitions Fund, and campus programming around the exhibition is graciously sponsored by the Mandel Foundation and the Walter and Mary Tuohy Chair of Interreligious Studies.