

Illuminations

| Spring 2017 |



In this Issue

Congratulations and Farewell Graduates!
(2-4)

Welcoming New Graduate Students (5-6)

Dr. Kelly Retires (7-8)

Dr. Kristen Tobey is here to stay! (11-13)

One last "Systematic" chat (14-15)

Graduate Students and Alumni News
(16-17)

***From left to right the graduating TRS graduate assistants:
Jenni Shelton, Raul Botha, Deborah Zawislan, and Michael Younes***



Congratulations and Farewell Graduates!



Raul Botha

Raul has been "living the dream" ever since he entered the TRS Masters program, where he has found a family-like atmosphere both on an academic and inter-human level. He is grateful for the knowledge he has acquired from professors, the range of perspectives he has gained in different classes, the friendships he has been cultivating among his student-peers, and the opportunities he has received as a graduate assistant to use his technical talents to support the TRS department in special projects. He is looking forward to finalizing his MA essay that focuses on the cohabitation between Catholicism and New Media. This summer, after graduation, Raul will continue his collaboration with the Romanian Catholic Diocese of Canton, while the remaining time will be fully invested in family activities and rediscovering the call for writing "just for the fun of it." A creative nature, Raul would like to continue exploring ways to come alive and awaken life in others and is fully open to God's surprising plan.



Pastor Kenneth Eric Robinson

Ken Robinson will graduate this year from the TRS MA program. After retiring from the military in 2012 he began his journey in education at John Carroll, studying theology and religious studies, and achieving his bachelor's degree in May 2015. His master's essay is on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s opposition to the Vietnam War. After graduation, he plans to enter the Clinical Pastoral Education Program at Saint Vincent Charity Hospital, a one-year certification program that will allow him to serve as a certified Chaplain in the hospital systems. Kenneth currently serves as Senior Pastor of the Christian Valley Missionary Baptist Church here in Cleveland, OH. Married for 25 years to Stephanie, a father and grandfather, Kenneth's experience here at John Carroll has made him a much more well-rounded pastor, father, grandfather, and friend.



Congratulations and Farewell Graduates!

Jenni Shelton

Jenni is a Graduate Assistant in the Department of Theology & Religious Studies at John Carroll University and will be graduating this summer. She researches memoirs and autobiographies of Christians who lived during the patristic, medieval, and early modern eras. Her goal is to illustrate the multi-faceted nature of religious experiences and highlight the ways in which women and men demonstrate through their relationship with God that they are valuable in the eyes of God and worthy of that relationship. Jenni wishes to send this message to others through digital humanities projects that incorporate memoir, related art, and theological reflection. Jenni is interested in the topics of female leadership as well as the acceptance of LGBTQ individuals in the Church today.



Michael Younes

Michael is an aspiring "Queer" activist biblical scholar with the ultimate goal of changing perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community in the Church and worldwide through engaged readings of the Bible. Finishing this program is a bittersweet phenomenon in that a six-year journey at John Carroll is coming to a close. Throughout both his undergraduate and graduate careers, Michael has grown close to many amazing scholars and has been granted opportunities that, in his words, he would not have had otherwise. Through the mentorship of Dr. Sheila McGinn, Michael has gained the skills needed to further his academic goals: "Without Dr. McGinn, I would not be where I am today." Michael's next step will be to move on to a PhD program in theology and religious studies, to further his knowledge and experience in order to influence the conversation.





Congratulations and Farewell Graduates!

Dr. Deborah Gries Zawislan

Deborah is grateful for the opportunity to be a student again and has thoroughly enjoyed her time in the classroom and her time as a GA. She has enjoyed the challenge and academic rigor found in her TRS studies and plans to continue exploring eco-feminism, a major focus of her Master Essay, as well as eco-spirituality in the new cosmology. After graduation, Deborah will return to building up her spiritual direction practice, executive coaching for faith-based leaders, and teaching. She hopes to develop retreat experiences for “praying with the book of creation” and to seek out opportunities to engage in ecospiritual-interreligious dialogues in the Cleveland area. As the semester winds down, in collaboration with Campus Ministry, Deborah will be hosting a self-directed Cosmic Walk and Silent Retreat Space during the week of May 1st to 5th in the Lombardo Student Center O'Dea Room. All are welcome!



COSMIC WALK

Monday, May 1 through Friday, May 5, Noon - 7 p.m.

Self-Directed Cosmic Walk & Retreat Space

The Cosmic Walk is a way of bringing together our knowledge of the 13.81 billion-year-old universe and the Earth within it, in a process that leads from our heads to our hearts. Come ponder God’s presence and action in our expanding universe. Cosmic Walk & Retreat Space will take place in the **O’DEA ROOM, LOMBARDO STUDENT CENTER.**

COME PONDER GOD'S PRESENCE IN AN EXPANDING UNIVERSE

Tuesday, May 2, 7 p.m.

Journey of the Universe: An Epic Story of Cosmic, Earth, and Human Transformation

From the Big Bang to the epic impact humans have on the planet today, this film is designed to inspire a new and closer relationship with Earth in a period of growing environmental and social crisis. Acclaimed author and evolutionary philosopher Brian Thomas Swimme describes our role as humans in this awe-inspiring universe, and his insights light up the night skies. The movie will take place in the **DOLAN SCIENCE CENTER DONAHUE AUDITORIUM.**

*These events are
free and open to the public.*

*For more information please email
dzawislan18@jcu.edu*



Welcoming
New Graduate Students

Graduate Assistants Deborah Zawislan and Michael Younes "opening doors" for new graduate students.



Christina Perez

Christina is in the five-year BA/MA program and just graduated with her bachelor's degree in December 2016. As an undergrad, she double-majored in Theology & Religious Studies and Sociology & Criminology. She is now working full-time on her master's degree and, in addition to her studies, she is a Graduate Assistant in the department. Christina's research focuses on western religions and the cultivation of religious identity. More specifically, her work examines how people in the western world become religious, and how they understand their religious identity within the larger religious landscape. Christina hopes to go on to earn her doctorate in Theology & Religious Studies, with a focus on the Sociology of Religion, and to teaching at the college level.



Theresa Rotuno

Theresa originally hails from Wooster, Ohio. She graduated from the University of Dayton in 2014 with a B.S.E. in Adolescent Young Adult Education and a concentration in Integrated Language Arts. As an undergraduate, Theresa had a passion for ministry and was heavily involved in retreats and faith communities. She spent a summer in Zambia, Africa, on a cultural and service-learning immersion. Following her time at UD, she taught high school English in Dayton for two years and then decided to return to her beloved Northeast Ohio to pursue the Master of Arts in Theology & Religious Studies here at John Carroll. Theresa is currently a graduate assistant for the Early College Mentoring Program in the Center for Service and Social Action, feeling "truly blessed to be back in Cleveland pursuing something so close to my heart." After graduating from the TRS MA program, Theresa hopes to make ministry her life's mission through work in campus ministry and service learning, and one day to open a retreat center with her soon-to-be husband. Theresa is grateful for the opportunity to pursue this mission at JCU!



Dr. Joseph Kelly Retires

Interview by Jenni Shelton

Dr. Joseph F. Kelly taught in the Theology & Religious Studies department for over four decades, between 1972-2016. During this period, he served as department chair for nearly a third of his time on faculty, contributing to significant positive changes in the department. He taught numerous courses on early Christianity, and will be remembered fondly as our expert on the history of Christmas. On a cool Tuesday, January morning, Dr. Kelly sat down with the Illuminations staff to talk about his retirement, reminisce about fond memories with colleagues and students, and discuss future writing and editing projects.

J.S.: Dr. Kelly can you tell us about your beginnings at JCU?

Dr. Kelly: I began teaching at John Carroll in 1972. After I became a professor, I learned that the view is always different from the top. John Carroll is a Catholic, liberal Jesuit school with a commitment to arts and sciences. When you're a professor, the size of the school matters, too. I've learned to trust the place that you are in.

J.S.: You have been at John Carroll for over four decades. What are some of the changes you have witnessed during this time?

Dr. Kelly: In the '70s the department was composed solely of Jesuits and clerics; I was the only layperson in the department. This changed when Paul Lauritzen, Sheila McGinn, and Paul Nietupski came. When I was chair, one of my major goals was to bring diversity to campus. I pushed for publishing, class observations, higher standards, and for women in the classroom. Now we have a woman chair and several women faculty in the department. It really was O'Malley [Thomas P. O'Malley, S.J.] in '85 that changed the place. I didn't do it by myself.

J.S.: Can you tell us your fondest memory? Perhaps a funny one?

Dr. Kelly: I remember when Paul Nietupski interviewed for his position at John Carroll. It was in the middle of a snowstorm and we talked for a long time, over an hour. I was happy when he joined the department; Drs. Lauritzen and McGinn, too. I was glad to get more lay people in the department.

J.S.: You wrote successful books on Christmas, taught classes, and gave numerous lectures on this topic. What is the story behind this “love relationship”?

As a young scholar, I researched biblical commentaries of the early middle ages. The monks were fascinated with the magi in Matthew’s infancy narrative, perhaps because the magi were Gentiles. I was fascinated too, and that is how I got started researching Christmas. I’m currently working on a book called *A Religious Christmas in America*. It traces the celebration of Christmas in the earliest European settlements in the United States and Canada. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Europeans who celebrated Christmas carried that tradition wherever they went. Puritans did not observe Christmas, but Catholic émigrés from many different European countries all brought their celebrations of Christmas to America.

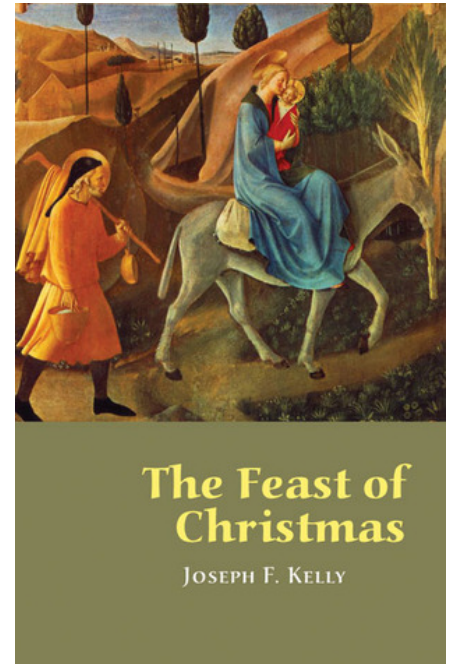
J.S.: Any piece of advice for entering students or graduating ones?

Dr. Kelly: I learned to write in graduate school. I wasn’t always great with deadlines. I had a job for the *World Book Encyclopedia*, and they had firm deadlines. It was then that I really learned to write, how to get things done. Learn writing by practice. The more you write, the better you will be. Write concisely, to the point. Don’t waste time.

For the future teachers, remember, it’s important to keep students interested. Know your audience. A lot of our students major in business or other disciplines. In theology and religious studies, we have so few students. Make the subject relevant for all students. Timing is also important. I learned a lot from watching Johnny Carson. I remember my first history teacher at Boston College—he influenced me. He got me interested. Do the same for your students.

J.S.: What will you miss the most?

Dr. Kelly: My colleagues and my students. I like my job but as for my retirement, I have no regrets. I’m surprised that I am so busy in retirement—there is just so much to do.

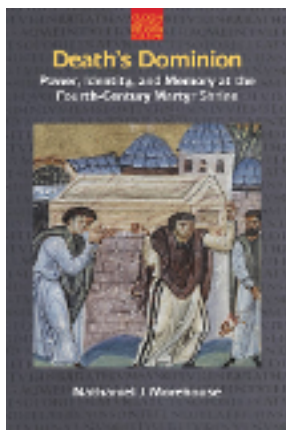


“I have no regrets!”

- Dr. Joseph F. Kelly



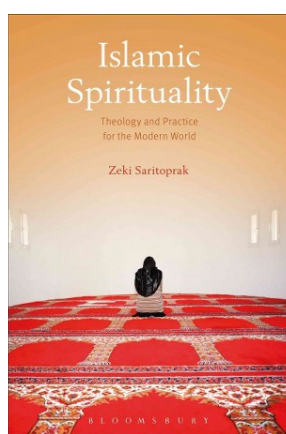
Dr. Kelly after his “Origins of Christmas” presentation (John Carroll University, December 2014)



Dr. Nathaniel J. Morehouse, *Death's Dominion* (Equinox, 2016)

Through a discussion of power dynamics with a critical eye towards the political situation of influential Christian leaders including Constantine, Damasus, Ambrose, and Augustine, *Death's Dominion* demonstrates the ways in which these individuals sought to craft Christian identity and cultural memory around the martyr shrine. During The fourth century the martyr cult was repeatedly a decisive tool for the augmentation and solidification of civil and religious authority. Ecclesiastical Power was consolidated and focused through the physicality of the bodies of the martyrs. (Source: www.equinoxpub.com)

Dr. Morehouse, a part-time faculty member in the TRS department, teaches courses in the area of early church history. For more information on the book see: <https://www.equinoxpub.com/home/deaths-dominion-2/>



Dr. Zeki Saritoprak, *Islamic Spirituality: Theology and Practice for the Modern World* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017)

This book examines and explores the inner dimension of Islam. The writings of important figures in the historical development of Islamic spirituality are examined, as well as the major sources of religious authority in Islam, the Qur'an and Hadith. Providing an overview of the intellectual and theological basis of Islamic spirituality, and including the author's own translations of a selection of key texts, this volume is ideal reading for courses exploring Islamic spirituality and mysticism and anyone interested in the spiritual practices of nearly a quarter of the world's population. (Source: www.amazon.com)

Dr. Saritoprak is the Director of the Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Chair in Islamic Studies at John Carroll University. For more information on the book go to: https://www.amazon.com/Islamic-Spirituality-Theology-Practice-Modern/dp/147257205X/ref=mt_paperback?_encoding=UTF8&me=

TRS Faculty Publications

Numerous full-time and part-time faculty in the TRS department have made scholarly contributions to their field of expertise in the recent months. Here is a list of faculty members that have made contributions through either book reviews, article and book publications, research, conference presentations or service.

Full-time faculty: Dr. Elizabeth Antus, Dr. Edward Hahnenberg, Dr. Paul Lauritzen, Dr. Sheila McGinn, Dr. Paul Nietupski, Dr. Zeki Saritoprak, Dr. Kristen Tobey.

Part-time faculty: Dr. Anne McGinness, Dr. Sean Martin, Anthony J. Marshall, SSS, Dr. Nathaniel Morehouse, Dr. Kathleen Philipps, Dr. David Sloan, Mr. Jared Ward ABD, Ms. Megan Wilson-Reitz.

TRS Grad Assistants: Christina Perez, Jenni Shelton, Michael Younes, Deborah Zawislan.

Congratulations to all and we hope to see many more fruitful outcomes of your research!

To access the detailed list of accomplishments with titles, see <http://sites.jcu.edu/trs/2017/048/trs-faculty-accomplishments/>



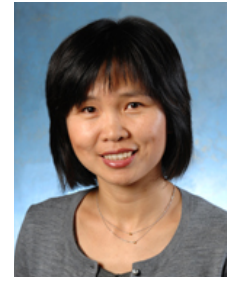
Tuohy Endowment Asian Research Trip

This May and June, on the occasion of its 50th year anniversary at JCU, the Tuohy Chair for Interreligious Studies will sponsor a student-faculty research project on the Silk Road. The research team will consult with scholars at the AJCU Beijing Center ("TBC") and will conduct research in their disciplines in sites across China. Student researchers will focus on ancient and modern contexts, and consider religious, cultural, and business perspectives. On return to JCU students will present their findings to the JCU campus community.

The five student researchers are:

- Erica Truong '20, Biology;
- Ivy Zhang '20, Psychology;
- Adriana Nelson '19, English;
- Haydn Whitmyer '19, International Business with Language and Culture;
- Michael Schmitt '19, International Business with Language and Culture.

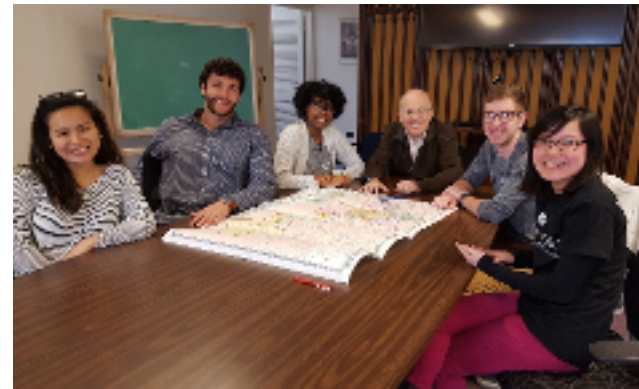
The two faculty members accompanying the students are Dr. Bo Liu, Art History, and Dr. Paul Nietupski, Theology and Religious Studies.



Dr. Bo Liu



Dr. Paul Nietupski



Dr. Paul Nietupski and his students.



Mapping out the itinerary for this great journey.



Islamic Art and Culture Week (April 18-20, 2017)

This is the Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Chair in Islamic Studies' 10th annual week of Islamic art and culture.

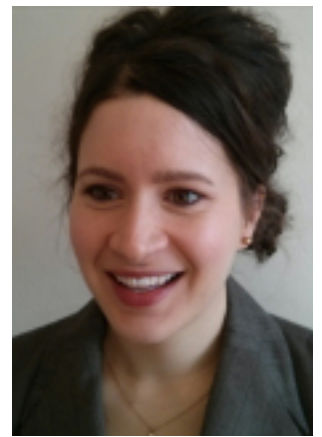
Tuesday, April 18: A performance of Sufi music

Wednesday, April 19: "Worth the Price: the Necessity of Islamic Art in an Iconoclastic Age" by Fr. Michael Calabria

Thursday, April 20: A showing of the film *Allah Made me Funny*

For a full event program and detailed information, go to:

<http://sites.jcu.edu/nursichair/2017/03/27/10th-annual-week-of-islamic-art-and-culture/>



Dr. Kristen Tobey is here to stay!

Interview by Jenni Shelton

A visiting professor since 2014, Dr. Kristen Tobey will become a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Theology & Religious Study Department starting the 2017-2018 academic year. Throughout the last three years, Dr. Tobey has taught an array of courses in the realm of Sociology of Religions and American Religious History and culture. Dr. Tobey was kind and brave to answer the Illuminations team's probing inquiries.

J.S.: Dr. Tobey, why teach Theology and Religious Studies?

Dr. Kristen Tobey: Religion is such a complex and important phenomenon, which, to me, means that it's an endlessly interesting topic of study. If I can share that interest with students—especially students who, after years of religious education, might be predisposed to think religion is boring or not a subject that deserves rigorous intellectual attention—for me, that's a good day's work. I'm not sure that the world is improved in any tangible way when more people are curious and informed about religion, but I am sure beyond a doubt that when people are poorly informed or closed-minded about religion, the world becomes a worse place. Teaching in the TRS department, I get to be around people—students and colleagues—who share that attitude and, at least as I understand it, are working to make the world a little better. That's a privilege.

J.S.: What are the pros and cons with working in a combined Theology and Religious Studies department?

K.T.: No object of study can be apprehended fully unless it's examined from multiple perspectives. Having several different disciplines represented in the TRS department means that we can



model different approaches for students, and we can also model multidisciplinary itself. I think this helps students see the value of approaching problems from many different angles, and helps them to become skilled at doing it themselves, which is an essential wherever their lives take them. If there's a con, I would say that students don't always know when it's appropriate to bring their own faith perspectives to bear on the material at hand, and when to strive for a more objective stance. In my subfield of sociology, for example, scholars often try hard to bracket their own faith stances, and to avoid assessing others' truth claims. (Whether or not this is actually possible is a question for another day.) In some other subfields, scholarship starts from a particular faith stance, and assessing others' truth claims is an important part of the scholarship. Understandably this can be confusing for students, but it's important they see both approaches.

J.S.: Do you have any teaching models?

K.T.: I'm always working to cultivate student engagement and community in the classroom, and I'm impressed by any teacher who succeeds in doing those things. The teachers I recall the most vividly from my own education are the ones who took students seriously, which is rarer than it should be, and the ones who were passionate about the subject. I remember going to an English professor's office hours as an undergraduate, and she had a rubber albatross hanging from one of her bookshelves. I was pretty proud of myself for getting that that was a reference to Coleridge's poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," but I was also impressed that she was clearly very into Coleridge. Anyone who can demonstrate that enthusiasm and excitement can be a part of adult professional life is doing students a service.

J.S.: You recently published a book, *Plowshares*. Could you explore the topic and the writing process?

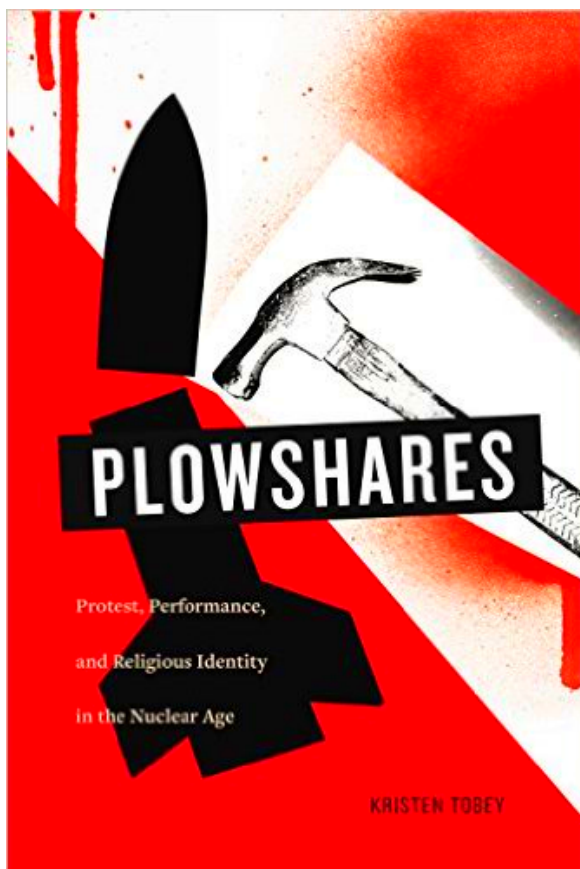
K.T.: The book is about a group of radical Catholic anti-nuclear activists who trespass onto nuclear facilities and pour their own blood over the equipment there. They believe that in doing so, they are effecting what they call symbolic

"the first book that explicates the religious logic behind their civil disobedience."

- Dr. Tobey on Plowshares

disarmament, and atoning for the nation's sin of nuclear idolatry. Their aim is the complete eradication of all nuclear weapons. They've been active since 1980 and are still active now, though the population is aging and dwindling. Mine is the first book that explicates the religious logic behind their civil disobedience actions. I also examine how that religious logic plays out in the Plowshares' social sphere. In addition to that sociological lens, as I thought about the Plowshares I found that the tools from other fields including performance studies and legal anthropology were extremely useful in making sense of what they do, and specifically, why they keep doing it even though, let's be honest, to an outsider it seems pretty ineffectual against the threat they want to address.

As far as the process of writing, I've been thinking about the Plowshares since college and writing about them since I was a doctoral student, almost ten years ago. At this point the Plowshares project feels to me like a really close friend or family member—there's a lot of affection and comfort and familiarity there, but also occasional frustration, and sometimes you wish you could take a break from the relationship. That is to say, motivation to work on that project waxed and waned, as happens with any project. Sometimes the motivation to get the book out came from a noble place (to tell the Plowshares' story, to increase readers' understanding), and sometimes it came from a much more mundane place (it's my job to publish). But just as important as whatever motivation I brought to the table were the other resources (time, money, emotional support) that I've been fortunate to receive from both the institutions where I've worked, Pitt and JCU. Many scholars have excellent manuscripts in some stage of preparation that they are never able to finish, not because they aren't ambitious or talented, but because they haven't been as fortunate as I've been.



"Remember that a lack of curiosity about religion makes the world worse, and now it's your job to spark that curiosity in others."

"Approach your TRS classes with an open mind. They are almost certain to defy your expectations in a good way, if you let them."

- Dr. Tobey

I thought about that a lot whenever my motivation flagged—I wanted to get the book (or article, or conference paper) out for my own sake, of course, and for the Plowshares' sake, but also as a way to validate all the help that's been given to me over the years, and to affirm all the people who were so generous in giving it.

J.S.: What should students know about you—something really interesting?

K.T.: I used to work as a baker and a farmer, and I'm delighted when students let their life experiences—even the ones that seem kind of random—inform their classroom learning. And almost invariably, I will bring up *Little House on the Prairie*/Oregon Trail/cake during the semester. They are relevant.

J.S.: Can you tell us what is one of your fondest memory at JCU? Perhaps a funny one?

K.T.: I remember most vividly the moments in the classroom or in office hours when I could see that some piece of course material, or something that a student or I had said, got a student to think about something in a new way. In that same vein, I love the moments when a student's question or observation gets me to think about something in a new way. In class just yesterday, a student proposed an analogy between nineteenth-century Spiritualism and Islam that had never occurred to me before, and it was perfect—so astute and illuminating for all of us in the classroom. I love when that happens, and when students start to realize that they can learn from each other, not just from me.

J.S.: What advice would you give to upcoming students? What about graduating ones?

Dr. Tobey: I would tell incoming students to approach your TRS classes with an open mind. They are almost certain to defy your expectations in a good way, if you let them. I would give graduating students another version of that same advice: Remember the open-mindedness that you cultivated in your TRS classes. Remember to suspend judgment before analysis. Remember that a lack of curiosity about religion makes the world worse, and now it's your job to spark that curiosity in others.



One last "systematic" chat.

*Interview with Dr. Elizabeth Antus
by Raul Botha*

This Spring semester, Dr. Elizabeth Antus, Assistant Professor in the TRS Department since 2015, will be teaching for the last time here at John Carroll University. Dr. Antus specializes in the field of systematic theology with a special interest in theological anthropology, which explores what the Christian tradition has to say about what it means to live a truly human life and to flourish in the midst of suffering and oppression. At JCU, she has taught TRS intro courses, Systematic Theology, and Christian Sexuality. Faithful to her "straight-shooter" style, Dr. Antus was equally kind yet firm, direct yet insightful, colloquial yet deserving respect when tackling our questions and curiosities.

Raul Botha: Dr. Antus, thank you for this opportunity. Can you share what brought you at John Carroll?

Elizabeth Antus: I liked the fact that John Carroll is a Catholic Jesuit University. I came from Boston College, so there is an affinity in identity. I also understand the Jesuit mission and I do believe in forming the students to be active in the world through intellectual engagement. Simultaneously, the academic job market is a buyer's market; in other words, it is very difficult to get a tenure track job. When I got my job at John Carroll, I was finishing my Ph.D., so I felt relieved to have this job!

R.B.: What were some challenges during these two years?

E.A.: I was shocked how steep the learning curve really is. You must remember, I transitioned from a graduate student to a professor—a natural shocker. I started initially with 30 student classes and gradually moved to 60-70 students. The sense of responsibility, concern for the university, and for the well-being of my students was omnipresent. It felt like juggling every day, without knowing how to juggle. Every day was a complete exhaustion. I'm sure there is an easier way to do teaching, but I always tried to do a really good job.

R.B.: What was rewarding during this time?

E.A.: One of the joys of teaching is interacting with the students, being in class, cultivating active discussions. That was a "good tired." The students are intellectually curious, kind, and they have been a real blessing to my job.

R.B.: If your teaching style would be a song, what song would that be?

E.A. (smiling): It depends on the class and material we're covering that day. For my Systematic Theology course the dynamic was in the style of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue", whereas in the Christian Sexuality class—due to the difficult nature of the material, sexuality and violence—a Sleater-Kinney feminist punk song would be my choice.

R.B.: Do you have models that have influenced your teaching style?

E.A.: I borrowed from all of my professors. From Matthew Ashley, I've taken the weekly writing. By temperament, I can be really feisty; but I've learned from Cathy Hilker [Mary Catherine Hilker, OP], my PhD advisor, the value of kindness and patience, which are harder for me. I also incorporated my intuitive sense. Answering basic questions such as "What was it like to be a student? What did I want from my professors? How can I explain this concept in a basic way? How should I set up this problem?" Because, at the end of the day teaching is not about relaying information. It is about communicating, which is always a two-way street. That's what I appreciated in my teachers, and that's what I'm trying to do as well.

R.B.: How was Teaching in the TRS Department?

E.A.: I felt a great sense of collegiality. I felt like I fit. There can be a lot of strife. but it is not the case for our department. They are outstanding faculty, really, really hard working people, who really care about the students. In fact, it is my main sense of sadness. I'm sad that I won't be around such industrious, virtuous people anymore.

R.B.: What can you take back after two years at JCU?

E.A.: I was in graduate school for 9 years, and I morphed into being passive – because of being a student for so long. Yet, having a PhD gave me the skills to be a helpful part of the community. Here, at John Carroll, I experienced a deepened sense of vocation—what it is like to be a professor. With this job I actually got a skill set: I can help people, but it's not always easy. Not to be self-aggrandizing, but after two years I have a better sense of who I am. I guess I grew up.

R.B.: Any advice for our graduate students who will be graduating in the next few months and facing life afterwards?

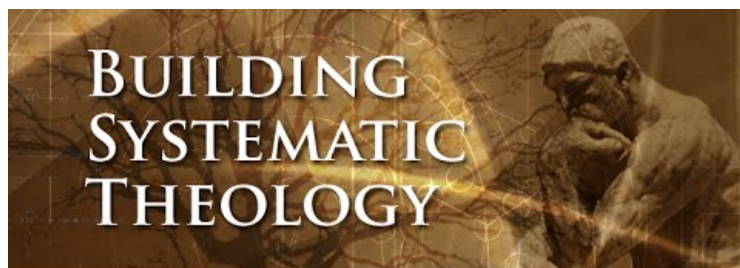
"Research and teaching is not about me, because it has to be plugging into something bigger."

- Dr. Antus

E.A.: Think: Am I capable of doing it? Do I have the skills to do it? Does it bring me joy? These are questions I ask myself, questions I want my students to have. I believe we have to be honest to who we are and do what brings us joy. What we do with our lives should help people. A doctorate is not about me wanting to read a lot of stuff; it is the University's investment in me. Research and teaching is not about me; it [whatever the next step is] has to be plugging into something bigger. In addition, a sense of humor is always good.

R.B.: Can you share one characteristic students mentioned about you that you find accurate?

E.A.: In the student evaluations, I received a lot of "Your class was scary but fun" remarks. Not one said I'm boring. I take that as an accomplishment.



After this semester, Dr. Antus will be joining Boston College's Theology Department where her husband, Andrew Prevot, is also on the faculty. The Illuminations team is grateful for having her as a professor and wishes Dr. Antus best of luck in her future academic endeavors!



Graduate Students and Alumni News



**A CELEBRATION
OF SCHOLARSHIP**
JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY
Teach • Discover • Integrate • Apply

Wednesday, April 5th, 2017, at John Carroll University's Dolan Atrium, four of our TRS graduate students Deborah Zawislan, Jenni Shelton, Christina Perez and Michael Younes presented at the annual JCU "Celebration of Scholarship."

Deborah spoke about eco-feminism in Jewish, Islamic and Christian traditions; Christina's paper focused on religious identity in Wiccan communities; Jenni presented about Catalina de Erauso, a seventeenth-century cross-dressing Catholic; while Michael delivered an exegesis of Paul's Letter to the Romans in comparison with modern views regarding homosexuality. Congratulations to our graduate scholars and to many more!



Our graduate scholars: Deborah, Christina, Michael and Jenni.

▶ **Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society Conference**

Michael Younes (TRS GA) presented a paper about "Opening Doors: Reinterpreting the Romans 1:18-27 on Homosexuality for the 21st Century" at the EGLBS conference in March 2017.

At the same conference, **Dr. David Sloan** presented "Followers of Yeshua in Secret: Christian Rabbis in the Tannaitic and Amoraic Periods."

▶ **Engaging Particularities Graduate Conference at Boston College**

Christina Perez (TRS GA) presented a paper on Wicca at the Engaging Particularities Graduate Conference on comparative theology and interreligious dialogue at Boston College the weekend of April 2-3, 2017.

▶ **Duquesne University English Graduate Conference**

Jenni Shelton (TRS GA) present a paper on Catalina de Erauso, a cross-dressing Catholic, at the Duquesne University English Graduate Conference "Cross-Currents," which took place on April 8, 2017.



Michael Younes and Dr. David Sloan

Duquesne University English Graduate Organization Presents

Cross-Currents
A Conference to Find Fluidity in
Identity, Discipline, & Media



Previously a graduate assistant, Mary Coffey is now a part-time instructor in the Theology & Religious Studies Department at JCU, teaching a class on Artful Spirituality.

From GA to MA and now PTI

Mary Coffey and the journey from discovering one's spirituality to teaching it.

It seems I've come full circle. I became interested in Ignatian spirituality years ago, when I attended a 8-week parish retreat on praying with St. Ignatius. I am now helping facilitate that retreat at a parish in Wickliffe. The 8-week retreat is a highlights tour of the very rich and deep *Spiritual Exercises*, and I knew I wanted more. I enrolled in the Ignatian Spirituality Institute at JCU and learned all about the *Spiritual Exercises* and how to use them to companion others who are interested in growing closer to God. After completing that two-year program, I was now a spiritual director. I learned quite a bit about theology through Dr. Nuth's presentations in the program, but came to realize how big the universe of theology is and how little I knew. Again, I wanted more. I took a deep dive into that universe by enrolling in the Master's program in Theology & Religious Studies here at JCU. I was a full-time student and a Graduate Assistant in the department, so I ate, drank and breathed theology for two years. And loved it! Through my Masters essay, I was able to combine my two areas of passion—creativity and spirituality—into a retreat that involved praying with images which arise in the imagination and concretizing those images in an art journal, using colorful oil pastels. It is like art therapy for the soul. Dr. McGinn has given me the opportunity to expand my 7-hour retreat into a full semester class for undergraduates this spring. Developing the curriculum for a new course is all-consuming for me but I love the subject matter and the students seemed be enjoying the class. We are exploring spirituality as a journey and visual art as a tool on that journey. We have covered the basics of drawing and will be playing with colorful paints, pencils, and other media throughout the rest of the semester. I hope I am opening their eyes to the mystery of God and God's love for us, as well as giving them permission to explore who God is and how to use creativity to fully embrace our *Imago Dei* as co-creators with God.



Joe Alto, graduate student in the JCU Theology and Religious Studies MA program, gained a teaching position at Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin High School because of his coursework and TRS teaching internship at Benedictine High School.

Job Opportunities for TRS Graduate Students: The Story of Joe Alto

Joe Alto, a current graduate student of the MA in Theology and Religious Studies at JCU, accepted a teaching position last April at Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin School. Joe teaches 9th- and 12th-grade theology. The best thing about his first year, he says, is "making all the connections with [his] students," while striving to make theological applications to their everyday lives. Joe admits that the constant grading, talking with parents, waking up early each day, and frequently shaving is a struggle, but it is all worthwhile. Joe honestly says that he has looked forward to going to work every day.

Along with teaching, Joe has added to his first-year workload by serving as the boy's JV soccer coach, and the boys' varsity lacrosse assistant coach. Apparently, he did not do too poorly his first year since NDCL has offered him a contract for the 2017-2018 school year. In his personal life, Joe and his college girlfriend recently got engaged. He is very excited for summer vacation so that he can catch up on reading and have some R&R.



Graduate Students Information

Illuminations Committee:

Dr. Sheila McGinn

Chairperson, Department of Theology & Religious Studies

Dr. Zeki Saritoprak

Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Raul Botha & Jenni Shelton

Editors, *Illuminations*

Kathy Merhar

Administrative Assistant

Department of Theology & Religious Studies

John Carroll University
1 John Carroll Boulevard
University Heights, Ohio
44118

Phone: 216.397.4700

Fax: 216.397.4518

E-mail: trs@jcu.edu

Website: go.jcu.edu/trs

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/jcutrs/

Due Dates for filing a formal Graduation Application:

Spring 2017 (May 21, 2017)

Application Deadline: **November 28, 2016**

Thesis, essay, or project deadline: **April 10, 2017**

Comps deadline: **April 17, 2017**

Summer 2017 (Aug. 31, 2017)

Application Deadline: **February 15, 2017**

Thesis, essay, or project deadline: **July 31, 2017**

Comps deadline: **August 7, 2017**

Winter 2017 (January 15, 2018)

Application Deadline: **July 10, 2017**

Thesis, essay, or project deadline: **November 20, 2017**

Comps deadline: **November 27, 2017**

Summer and Fall 2017 Graduate Courses:

