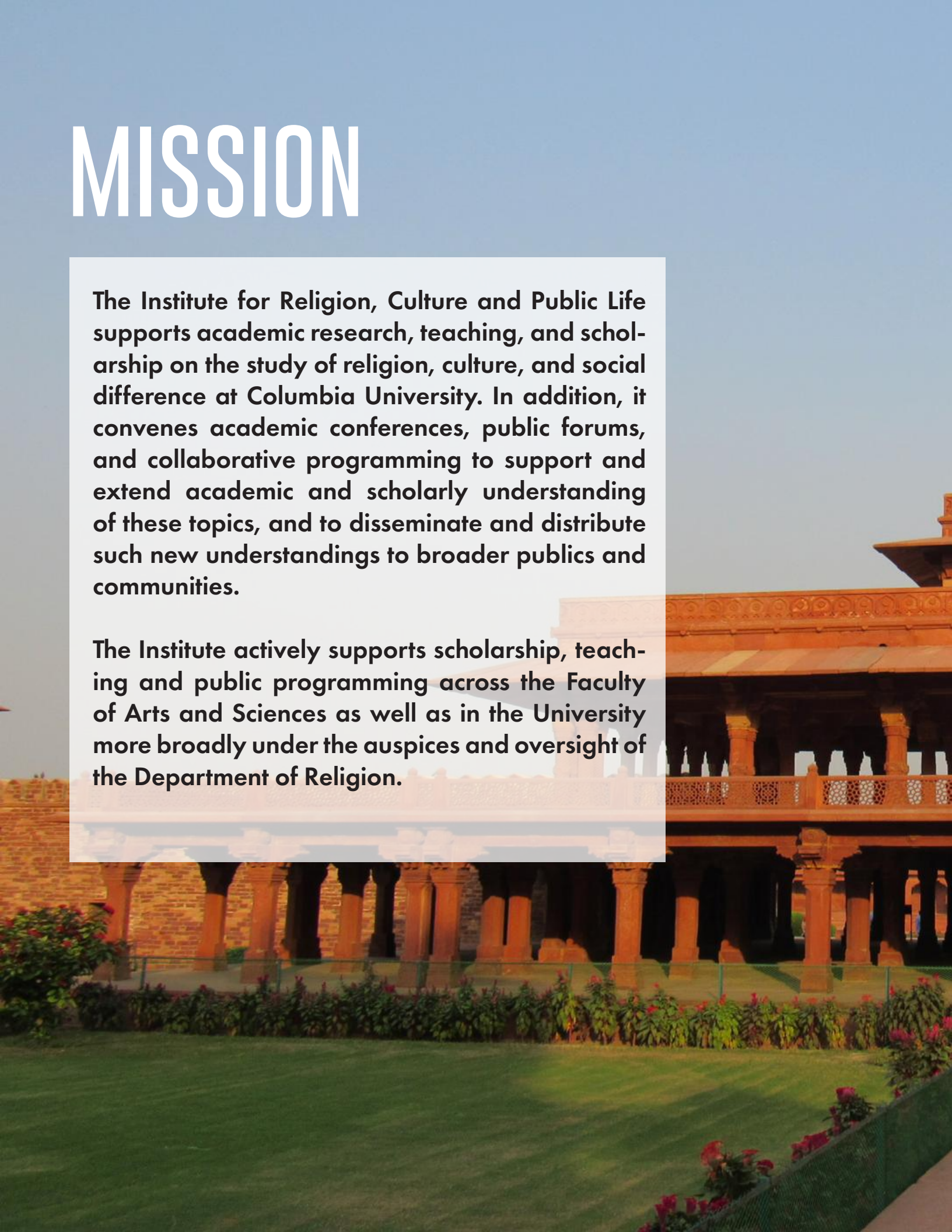


ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

MISSION

The Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life supports academic research, teaching, and scholarship on the study of religion, culture, and social difference at Columbia University. In addition, it convenes academic conferences, public forums, and collaborative programming to support and extend academic and scholarly understanding of these topics, and to disseminate and distribute such new understandings to broader publics and communities.

The Institute actively supports scholarship, teaching and public programming across the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as well as in the University more broadly under the auspices and oversight of the Department of Religion.



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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It has been a privilege to serve as Director of the Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life over the past two years. In this time, IRCPL has further developed as a hub for scholarly research and teaching that examines the diverse and changing ways that religion is manifest in and shapes public life. Since the restructuring of the Institute in 2016, we have emphasized faculty governance and group decision making under the auspices of the faculty advisory committee, with a renewed dedication to transparency and collaboration through open competitions for interdisciplinary workshops and faculty participation in the development of proposals for external funding. We have also expanded summer funding and research opportunities for students at all levels of study who are working on religion-related projects across the university.

We are now wrapping up the two-year Luce/ACLS research project “Life History in Northwest Africa: Everyday Life, Historical Memory, and the Public Square,” funded through their new Religion, Journalism, and International Affairs (RJIA) program. A two-year institutional grant enabled us to carry out a collaborative project that brought Professor Alexander Stille of the Journalism School and myself together as PIs to develop a team for conducting original research in Morocco, Mauritania, and Senegal focused on how religion and politics affect the lived experiences of everyday people in Northwest Africa. One effect of this grant has been to help us deepen IRCPL’s ties with the Journalism School, a link that I hope will continue to develop in the future. IRCPL’s work will continue with additional funding from the Columbia Alliance program and the Global Religion Research Initiative through the University of Notre Dame, grants which will enable us to train additional local graduate students in Senegal and, with Dr. Wendell Marsh, bring together the researchers from all three countries, as well as senior scholars, for a conference in the fall of 2018 in Senegal at which the researchers will present their own scholarly papers based on the research.

IRCPL has also completed the first year of a two-year initiative on “Religion & The Rise of Populisms: Difference, Dissent, and Tolerance,” funded by the President’s Global Innovation Fund. The first year focused on American populism and featured a speaker series organized by Jean Cohen (Political Science) and a conference co-organized by Professor Cohen and Alexander Stille (Journalism). With additional support in the form of the Alliance Joint Projects Grant, we will also be able to incorporate scholars from the Centre de Recherches Internationales (CERI) at Sciences Po in the next phases of this project. Next year we are planning conferences in Paris and Amman to think comparatively about how populisms are evolving in these different regions.



In an abundance of riches, we also received a Columbia Arts and Sciences Catalyst grant to develop a major initiative on religion and the environment in South Asia. After a successful planning workshop held near Delhi in fall 2017, we are in the early stages of developing a viable project that is intended to involve the Mumbai Global Center and will include an internship program for MA students that will anchor a religion and environment track as part of the South Asia Institute's MA program.

IRCPL programs encourage Columbia faculty to pursue research, teaching, and scholarly engagement. For example, the three-part workshop series "Sites of Religious Memory in an Age of Exodus" led by Seth Kimmel (Latin and Iberian Cultures) and Naor Ben-Yehoyada (Anthropology) examined the contemporary and historical movements of people and ideas throughout the Mediterranean, focusing on the practical use of space as a process fundamental to developing conceptions of community and identity. A project that I organized this year with the help of Ali Altaf Mian (Seattle University) was the interdisciplinary workshop "Queering Psychoanalysis: The Sexed Body in South Asia," sponsored by the Center for the Study of Religion and Sexuality (housed within IRCPL). This workshop stemmed in part from the previous year's conferences on Muslim Sexualities.

Though we provide details of our various events later in this report, I'd like to highlight a few events that are illustrative of the public-facing side of the Institute that fall outside of the usual scholarly conference/workshop model. "Writing God(s): The Creation of Modern Mythologies and Post-Modern Theologies in Comic Books," organized by Hussein Rashid (Barnard Religion) and Zachary Hendrickson (IRCPL Staff), was a panel conversation between a diverse group of comic book writers and scholars of religion and media, which took place at the 2017 New York Comic Con, a convention that draws in more than 150,000 people. IRCPL also cosponsored a staged reading and interfaith discussion of *Flight of the Ibis*, a play by psychoanalyst Alan Roland that problematizes issues of diversity and tolerance for a general public. We also organized and hosted the event "Perfect Praise in a Post-Soul Age: The Art and Politics of Contemporary Gospel Music" in partnership with the historic First Corinthian Baptist Church in central Harlem. It was an energetic night of music, discussion, and outreach centered on the life and musical contribution of Grammy award-winning gospel composer Richard Smallwood.

My time at IRCPL has also been about establishing new partnerships with organizations outside Columbia and strengthening our existing ones. For example, in partnership with the American Council of Learned Societies and its RJA program, IRCPL hosted a symposium this spring which brought together journalists and scholars of religion. IRCPL also hosted three ACLS Research Scholars in residence this year: John Corrigan (Florida State University); Anya Bernstein (Harvard University), and Attiya Ahmad (George Washington University). We continue to work closely with the Columbia Global Centers and are building ties with universities such as Gaston Berger University in Senegal and the International University of Rabat in Morocco.

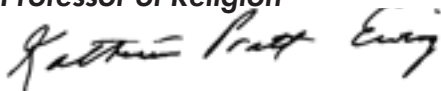


I have also overseen the growth of the IRCPL Book Series with Columbia University Press, which has published ten new books since I became director in 2016. Five of these were released in the last year, and we anticipate the forthcoming fall release of *Open to Reason: Muslim Philosophers in Conversation with the Western Tradition* from IRCPL Board Member, Souleymane Bachir Diagne: It is a book that should not be missed!

Before I conclude, I would like to take this moment to extend my sympathies to the family of IRCPL Co-Founder Alfred Stepan. His passing in October of 2017 was deeply felt by all of us at IRCPL, and we're honored to have been able to bring his final work to print. *Democratic Transition in the Muslim World: A Global Perspective*, edited by Professor Stepan and funded in partnership with the Henry Luce Foundation, has been described by Tarek Masoud of Harvard University's Kennedy School as a "carefully curated volume [which] demonstrates the influence that Stepan's thinking has had (and will have) on generations of Middle East scholars."

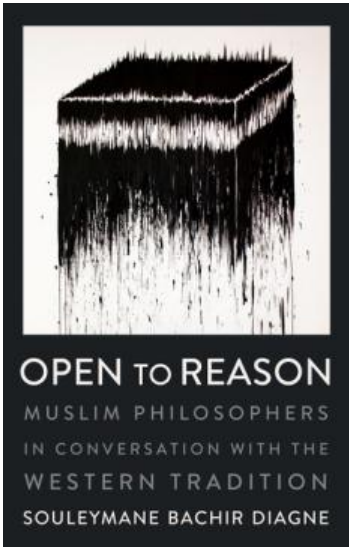
Finally, I welcome my successor, Matthew Engelke, who will be joining the Religion Department this summer. We have already been working closely together to ensure a smooth transition, and I look forward to all that he will accomplish as the new Director. Though I will be stepping down, I don't plan to disappear and will work with him on projects that continue into next year, as well as on the new collaborative project, "Rethinking Public Religion in Africa and South Asia," funded by a new 3-year grant from the Luce Foundation. I look forward to working under his leadership. I have treasured my time spent as Director of IRCPL, and I anticipate my continued involvement with the intellectual life of the Institute, the Religion Department, and the broader university (after a bit of a break while I'm on leave for the fall 2018 semester.) It is my hope that the Institute's presence further expands beyond Columbia and the academy, and that we may all continue to keep inclusive, public scholarship at the heart of our work.

Katherine Pratt Ewing
Director of the Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life
Professor of Religion



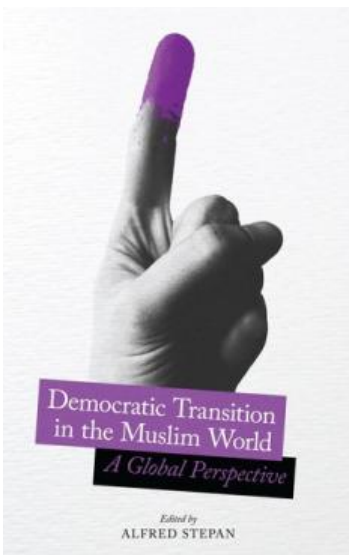


IRCPL BOOK SERIES



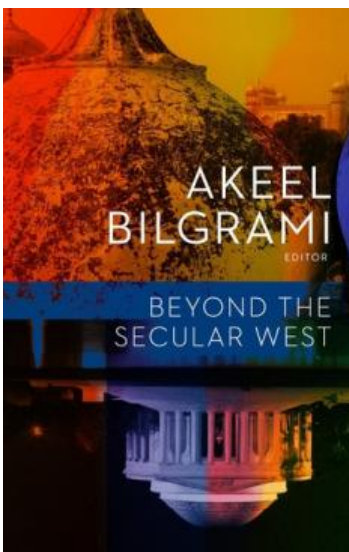
Open to Reason: Muslim Philosophers in Conversation with the Western Tradition by Souleymane Bachir Diagne, transl. by Jonathan Adjemian (Forthcoming in August 2018)

What does it mean to be a Muslim philosopher, or to philosophize in Islam? In *Open to Reason*, Souleymane Bachir Diagne traces Muslims' intellectual and spiritual history of examining and questioning beliefs and arguments to show how Islamic philosophy has always engaged critically with texts and ideas both inside and outside its tradition. Through a rich reading of classical and modern Muslim philosophers, Diagne explains the long history of philosophy in the Islamic world and its relevance to crucial issues of our own time.



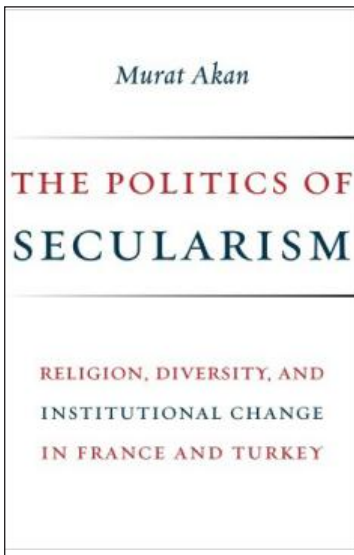
Democratic Transition in the Muslim World: A Global Perspective ed. by Alfred Stepan

Democratic Transition in the Muslim World convenes leading scholars to consider the implications of democratic success in Tunisia and failure in Egypt in comparative perspective. Alongside case studies of Indonesia, Senegal, and India, contributors analyze similarities and differences among democratizing countries with large Muslim populations, considering universal challenges as well as each nation's particular obstacles. Essays discuss the dynamics of secularist fears of Islamist electoral success, the role of secular constituencies in authoritarian regimes' resilience, and the prospects for moderation among both secularist and Islamist political actors.



Beyond the Secular West ed. by Akeel Bilgrami

What is the character of secularism in countries that were not pervaded by Christianity, such as China, India, and the nations of the Middle East? To what extent is the secular an imposition of colonial rule? Has modern secularism evolved organically, or is it even necessary, and has it always meant progress? A vital extension of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, in which he exhaustively chronicled the emergence of secularism in Latin Christendom, this anthology applies Taylor's findings to secularism's global migration. A collection of scholars, each a leader in their field, explores the transformation of Western secularism beyond Europe, and the collection closes with Taylor's response to each essay. What began as a modern reaction to—as well as a stubborn extension of—Latin Christendom has become a complex export shaped by the world's religious and political systems.



The Politics of Secularism: Religion, Diversity, and Institutional Change in France and Turkey by Murat Akan

Akan uses France and Turkey to analyze political actors' comparative discussions of secularism, struggles for power, and historical contextual constraints at potential moments of institutional change. France and Turkey are critical sites of secularism: France exemplifies European political modernity, and Turkey has long been the model of secularism in a Muslim-majority country. Akan analyzes prominent debates in both countries on topics such as the visibility of the headscarf and other religious symbols, religion courses in the public school curriculum, and state salaries for clerics and imams. Disputing the prevalent idea that diversity is a new challenge to secularism and focusing on comparison itself as part of the politics of secularism, this book makes a major contribution to understanding secular politics and its limits.



When the State Winks: The Performance of Jewish Conversion in Israel by Michal Kravel-Tovi

Religious conversion is often associated with ideals of religious sincerity. But in a society in which religious belonging is entangled with ethnonational citizenship and confers political privilege, a convert might well have multilayered motives. Over the last two decades, mass non-Jewish immigration to Israel, especially from the former Soviet Union, has sparked heated debates over the Jewish state's conversion policy and intensified suspicion of converts' sincerity. *When the State Winks* carefully traces the performance of state-endorsed Orthodox conversion to highlight the collaborative labor that goes into the making of the Israeli state and its Jewish citizens.



MICHAL KRAVEL-TOVI



SECTION ONE: ONGOING PROJECTS

Life History in Northwest Africa: Everyday Life, Historical Memory, and the Public Square

In the fall of 2016, IRCPL's "Life History in Northwest Africa" project was conceptualized by its Principal Investigators, Katherine Pratt Ewing and Alexander Stille, as a way to investigate how religion and politics affect the lives and experiences of ordinary people in Northwest Africa. The project is interdisciplinary and draws upon oral history, anthropology and ethnography, religious studies, and journalism to build an archive of life histories that will be studied by scholars and journalists. In early 2017 a team of researchers was assembled to conduct the life history research in three countries: Senegal, Mauritania, and Morocco. The research group has been brought together through theoretical and methodological exchanges in shared training workshops and through ongoing communication and dialogue. To add stability and structure to the project we have worked to create an institutional scaffolding to place the project within a wider academic context both in the region and abroad by developing relationships with research institutes and universities in each of these countries. This institutional work exceeds the project, setting the stage for further collaborations between academics and students.

Crossing traditional regional boundaries between the Maghreb and West Africa, the project prioritizes ordinary people in this "northwest" region to consider how personal narratives allow for a different, critical reflection upon history, socio-religious change, and contemporary politics. By focusing on life histories, the project aims to complicate the ways in which scholars map religious trends, practices, and beliefs onto complicated social and historical phenomena. Life histories provide a context within which the complexities



of the religious emerge within the complexity of social life itself. With this in mind, the project indirectly approaches questions about the relationship between different Islamic traditions (Sufism and Salafism, for example) and the politics that demarcate their boundaries. By situating the layered, complex, and opaque ways in which people enact and experience Islam within the foreground of research, the project challenges the neat discourses that popular media and partisans use to forward divisive political agendas. Broadly speaking, the interest lies in understanding socio-religious change in the region as a means to better understand the landscapes of contemporary Islam.

The past year has focused on building the archive of life histories. Under the guidance of Program Manager Kevin Witkow and Doctoral Research Coordinators Wendell Marsh and George Batalia, local researchers

have been working with interlocutors, interviewing them about their lives, recording these interviews, and writing interpretive descriptions of these interviews. Now that the life history research is complete, the archive is being assembled. It consists of audio-recordings, detailed written summaries of the interviews, and interpretive descriptions that provide further context, clarification, and guidance to future researchers. The assembled archive will initially be housed at IRCPL, and will eventually be accessible from various points of access in each of the countries in which the research was conducted. We hope to take advantage of the digital archive format and experiment with modes of accessibility so as to encourage creative engagement and research in the future.

In the next phase of the project, the life history researchers will analyze and present their findings at a conference at University of Gaston Berger in Saint Louis, Senegal, in December, 2018. This conference is funded by grants from Columbia's Alliance Program and the Global Religion Research Initiative through the University of Notre Dame. It will be organized around the project and its nascent archive. We will bring together scholars who do work related to the political and modern religious landscape of the region to engage with the project and the researchers' work. It will be an opportunity to think creatively about digital archives, scholarly access to data and materials, and the mobility of archives. Additionally, this conference will put IRCPL's project in conversation with a similar project of "Mémographie" being undertaken at the Laboratoire d'Analyse des Sociétés et Pouvoirs / Afrique-Diasporas (LASPAD) at the University of Gaston Berger. The scholars at LASPAD, including professors Mame-Penda Ba and Abdourhamane Seck, have provided insightful and important engagement with the conceptualization and execution of the Life History project.

As the project comes toward its end, the PI's research and archival work will continue through published scholarship. Stille has published one journalistic piece drawn from his research conducted in the summer of last year in the region, and Ewing's work is being developed as part of a forthcoming edited volume. The final conference will act as a space to further put all of this work into conversation, while also adding the voices of invited scholars to the conversation. As people, ideas, and materials continue to move across these countries under the auspices of political and religious projects and relationships, "Everyday Life, Historical Memory, and the Public Square" will provide a rich resource to those looking to better understand these dynamics and the complexity of the history of the contemporary socio-religious landscape.



MAPPING THE SACRED: PRESERVING LIFE-GIVING ECOSYSTEMS

This grant-writing workshop and community-based participatory mapping training module was held at the American Institute for Indian Studies Headquarters in Gurgaon, India with funding from the newly established Columbia Arts & Sciences Catalyst Grant. Under the guidance of Principal Investigator Katherine Ewing and Program Manager Em Winters, the project brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars from Columbia Arts & Sciences (MESAAS, Anthropology, Religion, and Earth and Environmental Sciences); forestry specialists affiliated with Yale and Cambridge; tribal rights scholars who work on conservation anthropology and religious issues; and activists from the indigenous-rights and conservation groups Vindhya Bachao, SGEA, and Digital Democracy. Collaboration among these entities facilitated knowledge exchange and discourse on indigenous-led forest conservation and land rights activism in India, Ecuador, Peru, Papua New Guinea, and the arctic coastal region of Alaska. During the grant writing workshop, the team developed a 3-year project grant proposal to fund a participatory cartography research initiative with Adivasi, scheduled tribes, and scheduled caste community members through in-country partners at Vindhya Bachao and SGEA in India, and Digital Democracy in Ecuador. After further development in consultation with the Mumbai Global Center, the proposal will be submitted to foundations and to President Bollinger's recently developed Columbia World Projects Initiative to be considered for additional funding which would allow for the scope and depth of the project to be extended.





POPULISM AND RELIGION SERIES

Religion & The Rise of Populisms: Difference, Dissent, and Tolerance is a multi-year initiative at IRCPL funded by the President's Global Innovation Fund at Columbia University and overseen by Katherine Ewing, PI.

Populism and Religion: The American Case was the first project in a planned series which will explore the connections between religion and populism in America, Europe, and the Middle East before concluding with an inter-regional capstone conference at Columbia University.

Everyone seems to be writing on populism these days. Given the global rise of populist movements, parties, and leaders - this is unsurprising. But there has not yet been a sustained focus on the role of religion in populist mobilizations. With this series, we set our focus to the American case. America is not exceptional in linking populist and religious discourse, tropes, and justifications; but it is instructive to consider the elements of American populism (past and present) which make it distinct. In doing so we hope to better understand its features and in what way American populism has been and continues to be a harbinger of the movements we see emerging around the globe.

Last fall José Casanova (Georgetown, The Berkley Center) delivered the first of three talks, titled "Religious Populisms, Right and Left, in Europe and the Americas." During his presentation, Casanova did a thorough comparison of populist movements within and across these regions, paying careful attention to the ways in which similar organizing tactics are employed across ideologically distinct groups and the threat that this contemporary moment of populist fervor could pose to the legitimization of liberal democracy.

Next was a presentation from Rogers Smith (U Penn) on "Religious Accommodations and 'Equal But Different' Citizenship." Smith laid out an argument in favor of a more conciliatory approach to religious liberty exemptions. He remarked that, "public policymakers, including courts, should subject all denials of such accommodations to strict scrutiny, granting exemptions unless their denial is necessary for compelling state interests."



To conclude the speaker series, Theda Skocpol (Harvard) spoke to "The Popular and Elite Roots of Republican Extremism in the United States." Her presentation drew from extensive research on the Koch political network and recent developments in eight pro-Trump counties. Following the movements of human resources - mid-level organizers and administrative assistants - as well as financial movements, Skocpol illuminates the extensive power and the depth of faults developing between the populist Tea Party Right and their more business-minded, neo-conservative compatriots.

In early March of this year, we concluded our series on Populism and Religion: The American Case with a two-day capstone conference. In an opening panel on "Religion and Populism in America: Historical Perspectives / Contemporary Logic", conference attendees considered various forms of American populism, including the intersection of populist and religious rhetoric and the relationship of religious activists to populist politics. E.J. Dionne delivered the keynote address, "When God Becomes a Populist: People's Religion, Right and Left."

On Day Two, we turned to the distinction between populist and other social movements, including movements with religious dimensions. The first panel on "Populism, Social Movements, Parties, and Leaders," asked what makes a social movement populist? What role do religious tropes and cultures play in them? And is there a distinctive relationship between populist movements and leaders, or between populist parties and movements? A second panel, "Populism and the Media," analyzed the relationship between populist politics and the media. Populist leaders and activists often criticize the "established" media as unfair and tend to reject expertise and claims to objectivity made by journalists, as well as scientists, administrators, and other "insiders." The epithet "fake news" has been used to undermine any and all truth claims made in the media. Yet populists make very clever use of the media, old and new. This panel, therefore, aimed to address how populists make use of old and new media and how the contemporary mediatization of politics fosters populist strategies. The final panel was centered around "Contemporary American Populism, Religion, and Gender."





PLURALISM IN EMERGENC(I)ES: MOVEMENT, SPACE, AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE

IRCPL, in collaboration with the Columbia Global Center in Amman, the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS) at the University of Oslo, and the Centre for Religion, Conflict and Globalization at the University of Groningen organized the two-day conference “Pluralism in Emergenc(i)es: Movement, Space, and Religious Difference,” which was held on December 2-3, 2017 at the Columbia Amman Global Center in Amman, Jordan.

The workshop brought together regional and international experts, students, activists, and scholars working on the topics of religious pluralism, refugees, migration, urban development, and identity politics from across the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Attendees were chosen through an open call for papers as well as by invitation. Each participant exhibited a particularly strong interest in expanding the understanding of pluralism in emergency situations by examining how it informs and negotiates the understanding of shared space, religious difference, and the status of displacement. Attendees explored pluralism as it emerges in response to contemporary global crises. The conference also analyzed the historical, social, and religious underpinnings of the so-called migrant and refugee crisis and tried to position them as a state of emergence, rather than a state of emergency.

The conference was structured around four panels – Emerging Spaces and Settlements; Religion and Refugees: Conversations from the Field; Collective Memory and Identity; and Conceptualizing and Comparing Pluralism in Emergencies – whereby the participants presented their theoretical and empirical work on pertinent issues, such as cultural memory, hospitality, displacement, humanitarianism, international interventions, encampments, and conceptualizations of pluralism as means to achieve various ends. In addition to the panels, round table discussions at the end of each day facilitated conversations on potential solutions to and different forms of pluralism in emergency situations as a technology of power.



One of the outcomes of the Amman conference includes the production of an edited book volume, which will be published with IRCPL and Columbia University, and other online writing fora. The second conference in the series will take place at the Columbia Global Center in Tunis, Tunisia in 2018.

SECTION TWO: PROGRAMS & SERIES

Writing God(s): The Creation of Modern Mythologies and Post-Modern Theologies in Comics at New York Comic Con

This panel conversation event was held at the 2017 New York Comic Con, marking the first time that an Ivy League university has presented at a major comic book convention. IRCPL Program Coordinator Zachary Hendrickson, and Professor Hussein Rashid worked to bring together a diverse group of comic book writers with scholars of religion and media. Opening remarks were given by Zachary Hendrickson, and panelists included: Lousie Simonson (Writer), Marjorie Liu (Writer), Simon Spurrier (Writer), Karen Greene (Columbia), and Professor Rashid as moderator. The conversation focused on the role that superheroes have had in shaping a shared American imagination and mythology, with particular attention given to the interplay between religious and secular themes in superhero stories. Panelists also discussed whether comic books and their characters can perform a similar type of “work” (moral, communal, spiritual, and philosophical) as more traditionally recognized religious practices and figures.



SITES OF RELIGIOUS MEMORY IN AN AGE OF EXODUS

Held over the course of the 2017-2018 academic year, “Sites of Religious Memory in an Age of Exodus” was a three-event workshop series whose goal was to examine the relationship between the contemporary movement of people across and along the Mediterranean and the emergence, re-signification, and use of sites of memory. Although each workshop was dedicated to a different region of the Mediterranean (east, central, and west) and loosely focused on distinct themes (pilgrimage and miracles, material traces and archives, and conquest and colonialism), debate about the methodological challenge of how and why to theorize the Mediterranean itself was a thread that ran through all three events. In order to foster a dynamic conversation about both scholarly method and, more generally, the politics of the past in the present, the invited speakers included a mixture of social scientists and humanists whose specialties ranged from the medieval period to present.

There were several memorable moments from the event series. To mention just a few examples, the November 2017 workshop on the eastern Mediterranean featured a fascinating dialogue between Adnan Husain, a historian from Queens University, and Columbia’s own art historian Avinoam Shalem about how to investigate the reception and transformation of miracles across the religious and political frontiers of Jerusalem and elsewhere. How do the sources and agendas of one religious community shape the miracles of another community? In the February 2018 workshop on the central Mediterranean, the historian Giovanna Fiume from the University of Palermo and the archeologist Yannis Hamilakis from Brown University highlighted how the constitution of a material and visual archive of Mediterranean violence is a political as well as an hermeneutic act, which may be able to make early modern and contemporary moments illuminate each other. And in the final April 2018 workshop on the western Mediterranean, the conversations among UC, Berkeley anthropologist Charles Hirschkind, and the literary scholars Nina Zhiri and Eric Calderwood, from UC San Diego and the University of Illinois, respectively, focused on the Spanish and Moroccan deployment of medieval “Al-Andalus” to divergent religious and political ends. In each of these cases, our Mediterranean frame provided an impetus to think outside traditional national boundaries. Through moments like these, “Sites of Religious Memory” displayed the productive potential of conversations that reach across the spatial, disciplinary, and historiographic divides that have traditionally defined scholarship on the Mediterranean.



40TH BAMPTON LECTURE IN AMERICA

Cardinal Péter Erdő - The Role of Religion and the Churches in a Secular State

His Eminence, Cardinal Péter Erdő of Esztergom-Budapest, Primate of Hungary, delivered the 40th Bampton Lecture in America on Monday, January 29th, 2018 on "The Role of Religion and the Churches in a Secular State," in the Low Memorial Library Rotunda. Cardinal Erdő was also the honored guest of Father Dan O'Reilly for Mass on the preceding Sunday, January 28th, 2018, at St. Paul's Chapel on Columbia's central campus.

The lecture delivered by His Eminence centered on his belief that contemporary nation states need to rebuild more cooperative relationships with religious institutions. In his view, it is only through the moral guidance of religious institutions that the protections and guarantees offered by states may truly be fulfilled. In this way, he argued that a closely-guarded and mutually supportive relationship between states and religious institutions was critical to the future well-being of both.

Founded in 1948 through a bequest from Ada Byron Bampton Tremaine, the Bampton Lectures in America are a series of lectures given at periodic intervals by prominent scholars in the fields of theology, science, art, and medicine. In accordance with the wishes of Ms. Tremaine, the lectures are delivered to a general audience and subsequently published. Included among those who have delivered the Bampton Lectures are: Arnold Toynbee, Paul Tillich, Fred Hoyle, Alasdair C. MacIntyre, Jonathan Riley-Smith, and Irving Weissman.



RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE SERIES

Tisa Wenger - Native Americans & the Dilemmas of Religious Freedom

What did religious freedom mean for Native Americans at the turn of the twentieth century, a time when the U.S. government was working to eliminate Indigenous identities and few Americans considered this freedom applicable to their traditions? On Indian reservations across the United States, Native Americans found their religious freedom claims limited by the cultural biases and coercive structures of settler colonial rule. In this talk, Wenger argued that religious freedom claims have sometimes served indigenous assertions of cultural and political self-determination—while also showing how Indigenous traditions were often transformed in the process.

Hussein Rashid - Religion and the Digital Turn

The methods of the Digital Humanities present an opportunity to think about the goals and methods in the Study of Religion. The emergence of these new tools challenges the ways in which we consider academic work, and the premises around which Study of Religion is built. Rashid suggested that by broadening the scope of what we can do with “religious” material, we can more broadly imagine what religion is.

Ronit Y. Stahl - Enlisting Faith: Religion and the State in the U.S. Armed Forces

The American state has long harnessed religion to great effect, and the military chaplaincy exemplifies how faith could fortify military aspirations and personnel. But what religious views did the military express and how did its religious commitments change over time? In this talk, Stahl examined how the military has used and managed religion over the twentieth century, demonstrating the complex processes and consequences of state investment in religion. The talk demonstrated how, over time, active oversight of religion in the armed forces built a public (and publicly lauded) commitment to pluralism but also spurred a renewed interest in sectarianism.



PERFECT PRAISE IN A POST-SOUL AGE: THE ART AND POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY GOSPEL MUSIC



In partnership with one of the most historic churches in central Harlem, the First Corinthian Baptist Church, IRCPL hosted a night of music, discussion, and outreach. Centering on the life and musical contribution of Grammy award-winning gospel composer Richard Smallwood, Perfect Praise brought together gospel music practitioners, industry executives, and scholars for a panel conversation on the musical histories, theological sensibilities, and political tensions that inform and animate the composition, performance, distribution, and consumption of gospel music in contemporary society. To conclude the evening, renowned gospel artist Richard Smallwood and his supporting ensemble put on a concert for hundreds of members of the public, displaying much of what had just been discussed in theory during the panel, now in practice on stage. The concert culminated with Smallwood and company bringing the audience to their feet with a collective performance of his world-renowned song “Total Praise.”

QUEERING PSYCHOANALYSIS: THE SEXED BODY IN SOUTH ASIA

Organized by IRCPL director Katherine Pratt Ewing and Ali Altaf Mian (Seattle University), this two-day workshop, which was cosponsored by the Center for the Study of Religion and Sexuality and IRCPL, addressed theoretical and methodological questions that scholars must tackle when studying queer sexualities and gender in South Asia. The workshop brought together a small, interdisciplinary group of well known senior scholars and junior scholars in a format that allowed extensive discussion of each paper, with participants serving as discussants for each other's papers, with an eye toward producing a collection of edited papers. The workshop was informed by the following guiding questions: What does psychoanalysis offer us as scholars of alternative genders and sexualities in South Asia, and how might we engage with the analytical resources of psychoanalysis without privileging its broader assumptions about subject formation? How do we integrate into our analytical frameworks the important challenges and supplements to psychoanalysis voiced by Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, and other scholars of different orientations? How might we decenter and provincialize the analytical privilege often accorded to psychoanalysis and its European critics by listening to local sources on the ground and by being attuned to non-Western speculative and theoretical traditions? How can these questions be addressed with reference to gender, sexual difference, and sexuality as objects of study situated in the social, political, intellectual, and religious landscape of modern South Asia?



Photo Credit: Allision Joyce/ Getty Images

SECTION THREE: TALKS & LECTURES

Elad Lapidot - Anti-Anti-Anti-Semitism

Lapidot, of Freie Universität Berlin, introduced his critical reflections on anti-Semitism and, more importantly, on the critique of anti-Semitism (anti-anti-Semitism). His critique came from the perspective of political epistemology, namely the relation between knowledge theory and political theory. During his lecture, he highlighted the problematic role that anti-anti-Semitic discourse plays in post-WWII and contemporary political epistemology in disassociating knowledge from politics. There is a certain problematic figure of the Jew, he argued, that anti-anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism share. Following Dr. Lapidot's initial presentation, he was joined by interlocutor Dr. Gil Anidjar of Columbia University. This conversation drew on the works of Heidegger, Adorno, Sartre, Arendt, Badiou, and Nancy.

Murat Akan - Book Talk | *The Politics of Secularism: Religion, Diversity, and Institutional Change in France and Turkey*

Speaking about his latest book, Murat Akan remarked on how discussions of modernity – or alternative and multiple modernities – often hinge on the question of secularism, especially how it travels outside its European context. In *The Politics of Secularism*, Murat Akan has reframed the question, exploring its presence both outside and inside Europe and offering a rich empirical account of how it moves across borders and through time. Too often, he argued, attempts to answer this question either imagine a universal model derived from the history of Western Europe, which neglects the experience of much of the world; or they emphasize a local, non-European context that limits the potential for comparison. Disputing the prevalent idea that diversity is a new challenge to secularism and focusing on comparison itself as part of the politics of secularism, he offers a major contribution to understanding secular politics and its limits.

Recognition in Religion and Theology: Philosophical, Historical, and Literary Perspectives

This panel discussion highlighted the work of a group of Finnish scholars, who have been working on a six-year project at the University of Helsinki on Reason and Religious Recognition, investigating the concept of social recognition and its implications for the study of religion. They introduced selected themes from individual and joint research projects and discussed the challenges of combining historical discussions of religious identities with contemporary systematic explorations of recognition, as well as the critical issue of “recognition-failure” in theodicies offered as responses to the problem of evil, discussed since the Book of Job. The final paper on theodicies as failures of recognition introduced Sari Kivistö's and Sami Pihlström's recent joint book, *Kantian Antitheodicy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Courtney Bender - Studying Up: A Brief History of the Religion of the Future

In the period immediately following WWI, a large section of the American public was beginning to look up. In the short decades between WWI and WWII, there was a rapid expansion into the sky both in thinking and in physical presence. Massive skyscrapers were carving up the skylines of American cities like New York, and commercial air travel was becoming an affordable reality for the first time. With this presentation, Bender explored how the sensation of being in the sky and viewing the world from above influenced how religious and secular figures alike were reflecting upon and renegotiating their ideas about what the religion of the future might look like.

Alireza Doostdar - The Intimate Republic: Piety and Objectification in an Islamic State

There are many ways to think conceptually about an Islamic state like Iran's Islamic Republic. In this talk, Doostdar adopted the rather uncommon approach of thinking about the state in terms of the ways in which it is objectified in the bodies of its subjects: how it articulates their gestures, imprints itself in their ethical compartments, finds expression through their intimacies, and so on. More specifically, he examined the ways in which pious self-cultivation is entangled with bureaucratic practice, and the tensions that arise between objectification and intimacy in the struggle to be a better Muslim.



SECTION FOUR: IRCPL SUPPORTED EVENTS

2018 Luce/ACLS Religion, Journalism & International Affairs Inaugural Symposium and Keynote

On April 18, IRCPL and the Columbia Journalism School hosted the second day of the inaugural symposium of the Luce/ACLS Program in Religion, Journalism & International Affairs. The program promotes richer, more balanced insights about the political, social, and cultural roles of religion by encouraging new connections between scholars of religion and journalists who cover global affairs. Since the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) launched the program in 2016, it has supported scholars at over a dozen different institutions across the country through an interrelated set of programming grants for universities and year-long research fellowships for individual scholars of religion. The Luce/ACLS symposium drew on the collective experience of the program's growing community by bringing the program's grantees and fellows together with thought leaders and distinguished media practitioners.



The event featured a number of panels that put journalists from *The Atlantic*, *Slate*, *Buzzfeed*, and the Pulitzer Center into dialogue with humanities and social science scholars on a range of topics, including how best to bridge training and research in journalism and religion scholarship in higher education; how to encourage collaborations between journalists and scholars on joint writing projects; how the global rise of nationalist and populist movements affects our understanding of the role of religion in society; and how the digital sphere has both improved and in some ways distorted the way religious belief and practice are portrayed in the media. The symposium culminated in a public keynote event and conversation, titled "How the Media Found Religion: Covering Faith in 2018 and Beyond," with journalist Emma Green of *The Atlantic* and David P. Gushee, distinguished ethicist and current president of the American Academy of Religion.

Flight of the Ibis

A musical, mystical & psychological drama, *Flight of the Ibis* is a powerful & imaginative exploration of the spiritual underpinnings of the Umayyad Caliphate in 10th century Cordoba, Spain, the most culturally advanced country in medieval Europe, with remarkable interfaith harmony. Simultaneously, the play depicts the psychological elements that undermine this enlightened state: a paranoid fixation on enemies, megalomania, self-aggrandizement, illicit methods, and overreaching. That these elements occur in the protagonists, rather than the seeming antagonist, bespeaks their presence in everyone.

Cosponsored Events

Concert | Danish Husain - Qissebaazi: A Multilingual Storytelling Performance

Conference | Pious Technologies and Secular Designs

**Panel | Adopting Reformation Ideals and Practices in South India:
Impact on Indian Agents**

**Lecture | Anya Bernstein - Freeze, Die, Come to Life: The Many Paths to Immortality in
Contemporary Russia**

Lecture | Nadjie Al-Ali and Latif Tas - Beyond Fighting ISIS: Gender, Conflict & Nationship

Book Talk | Josef Sorett - *Spirit in the Dark: A Religious History of Racial Aesthetics*

**Lecture | Victor Willi - The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: Evolution in Organization and
Ideology from the Early 1970s until 2017**

Lecture | Spirit of Justice: A Conversation Between Michelle Alexander and Naomi Klein

Film Screening | Between Fences + Q&A with Director Avi Mograbi

**Conference | LEGITIMACY – MYTHOLOGY – EPISTEMOLOGY:
Religion and the Concept of the Political**

Concert | Music from the Holocaust: Telling the Story Beyond Words

Lecture | Gauri Viswanathan - Gandhi in the Gallery: The Art of Disobedience

Book Talk | Halifu Osumare - *Dancing in Blackness: A Memoir*

Lecture | Federico Finchelstein - Populism, Racism, and Antisemitism in the Americas



IRCPL RESEARCHERS

Dr. Kristin Soraya Batmanghelichi - IRCPL Senior Research Scholar - is a women's activist, feminist scholar, and Associate Professor for the Study of Modern Iran in the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS) at the University of Oslo, Norway. In 2013, she earned a PhD in Iranian Studies from the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University. She was a postdoctoral fellow at IRCPL in 2016-2017 and is co-organizing IRCPL's two international conference series on populism and pluralism. Her research focuses on contemporary women's movements, sexuality, and gendered public space in Iran and the modern Middle East. Her recent publications on sexuality, government morality, cyberfeminism, and women's activism in Iran can be found in the *Journal of Anthropology of the Middle East*, *Gender and Sexualities within Muslim Cultures*, *Feminist Media Histories Journal*, and the *Journal of the Society for Contemporary Thought and the Islamicate World*. Bloomsbury Press will publish her manuscript on sexuality and gender in contemporary Iran in late Fall 2018.

Sami Al-Daghistani - IRCPL Research Scholar - achieved a double-PhD in Islamic Studies (supervision at Leiden University, Columbia University, and WWU Münster). Since 2017, Sami has been a Research Fellow at IKOS at the University of Oslo. His research and teaching focus on Islamic intellectual history, economic thought in Islamic tradition, legal discourse, Islamization process, and ecological economics. He has published numerous articles on the intellectual history of Islamic economics and law, and edited two volumes on the Second Gulf War (2010), and on Middle Eastern culture and politics (2013). Recently, he published two book translations from Arabic to Slovenian - Ibn Battūta's *Rihla* and Ibn Tufayl's *Hay ibn Yaqzān* (both 2017). His two monographs on Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's economic philosophy, and on the history of economic tradition in Islam are forthcoming in 2018.



A. George Bajalia - Doctoral Research Coordinator - is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University and a theatre director who works between the US and Morocco. Tentatively titled *Waiting at the Border: Language, Labor, and Infrastructure in Northern Morocco*, his dissertation focuses on the borderland narratives of the Strait of Gibraltar, and the social, cultural, and political relations produced through these border apparatuses, and imminent to the action of waiting. His dissertation research in Morocco is supported by the CAORC-Mellon Mediterranean Research Fellowship, the American Institute of Maghrib Studies Long-Term Fellowship, the Fulbright-Hays DDRA fellowship, and research fellowships from Columbia University's Middle East Institute and the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life. Complementary to his own research, he is the research coordinator for IRCPL's project "Life History in Northwest Africa: Everyday Life, Historical Memory, and the Public Sphere," as well as an organizer of the IRCPL-Columbia Global Centers conference series on "Pluralism in Emergenc(i)es."

Wendell Hassan Marsh - Doctoral Research Coordinator - recently completed his Ph.D in African studies from Columbia University. His work explores the historical encounter of Islam and the African world as mediated in Afro-Arabic texts. His dissertation, *Compositions of Sainthood*, explores the role performed by texts in the making of Muslim sainthood during the founding moment of Senegalese modernity. More broadly, Wendell is interested in contemporary historical transformations in northwestern Africa and the global politics of knowledge production. He has participated in the "Life History in Northwest Africa" project at IRCPL as the research coordinator for the local scholars in Senegal and Mauritania.

Em Winters - Project Manager - is currently working on a PhD in Development Studies at the University of Cambridge conducting research on food security issues among Rohingya refugees in Ukhia, Bangladesh. They received their Master's degree in South Asian studies from Columbia University in 2017 focusing on agrarian development in Bangladesh. During their time at IRCPL, they managed the "Mapping the Scared: Preserving Life-Giving Ecosystems" initiative and worked to develop the project's network in India. Their academic interests include anthropological analysis of climate change adaptation, gender equity, food security, Rohingya society & culture, and development-induced displacement.

Kevin Louis Witkow - Project Manager - received a Master's Degree from the Religion Department at Columbia University in 2016. His interests include the anthropology of religion and secularism, Islam, the anthropology of Morocco, and Palestine/Israel. During his time in the Religion Department, his work focused on secularism and the politics of history writing in Palestinian nationalist thought. At IRCPL, Kevin is the project manager of the ACLS/Luce Project "Life History in Northwest Africa: Everyday Life, Historical Memory, and the Public Square." He coordinates ongoing research in Northwest Africa and is developing a nascent network of scholars across the region interested in recent histories of the political, social, and religious.

THE LUCE/ACLS FELLOWS IN RELIGION, JOURNALISM & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Luce/ACLS Program in Religion, Journalism & International Affairs (RJIA) is an initiative designed to foster new connections between scholars and journalists covering international affairs. IRCPL was chosen as a host institute for the scholars named below after receiving the Luce/ACLS grant for “Life History in Northwest Africa: Everyday Life, Historical Memory, and the Public Square.” This program is made possible by the generous support of The Henry Luce Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies.

Attiya Ahmad is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the George Washington University. Her research focuses on the interrelation between gender, labor migration, diasporic formations, cosmopolitanism, and Islamic movements crosscutting the Arab Gulf States and South Asia. Ahmad is also developing a project focusing on halal tourism networks spanning the Arab Gulf States, the United Kingdom, and Turkey. Her work has appeared in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, *Cultural Anthropology*, and edited volumes focusing on labor migration, diaspora, and religion in South Asia and the Gulf Arab States. She is the author of *Everyday Conversions: Islam, Domestic Work, and South Asian Migrant Women in Kuwait*. She obtained her PhD in Cultural Anthropology at Duke University, and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University.

Her current project, *Halal Tourism: Gendered Muslim Aspirations and Material Counterpoints Amidst the Spoils of War in the Middle East*, examines why entrepreneurs and consumers consider tourism to be an important site for producing Islamic piety and Muslim belongings—even in the face of the uncertainty and risk that mark shifting landscapes of conflict in the contemporary Middle East. By analyzing the activities of halal tourism purveyors and consumers spanning the Middle East, South-East Asia, and Europe, this ethnographic study highlights how material relations figure in the production of Muslim gender dynamics, subjectivities, affinities, and histories. “Halal Tourism” furthers our understanding of why spaces of leisure have become sites of violence and religious-secular contestation, as well as our understanding of the scale and complexity of transnational Muslim mobility and religious aspiration amidst global landscapes of political upheaval, conflict, and the ongoing refugee crisis.

Anya Bernstein is John L. Loeb Associate Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University. Her first book, *Religious Bodies Politic: Rituals of Sovereignty in Buryat Buddhism* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), was the winner of the Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion from the American Academy of Religion and an Honorable Mention for the Davis Center Book Prize in Political and Social Studies from the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Her second book, *The Future of Immortality: Remaking Life and Death in Contemporary Russia*, forthcoming with Princeton University Press in 2019, explores the interplay between questions of immortality and life extension industries across the Soviet Union and postsocialist Russia, drawing on archival and ethnographic methods to investigate these technoscientific and religious futurisms. As a visual anthropologist Bernstein has directed, filmed, and produced several award-winning documentary films on Buryat Buddhism and shamanism, including *Join Me in Shambhala* (2002) and *In Pursuit of the Siberian Shaman* (2006).

Her new project, entitled *The Future of Immortality: Remaking Life and Death in Contemporary Russia*, explores the intersection of religion and science in post-Soviet and post-atheist Russia, focusing on the increasing anticipation of an end to earth as we know it and on how technology is responding to remake human bodies for an immortal age. Drawing on archival materials and fieldwork with contemporary Russian religious and technoscientific futurist movements, such as Russian Cosmism and transhumanism, the project expands current Euro-American understandings of the relationship between science and religion by reflecting on how hopes and fears for the future translate into policy debates on new medical technologies. The project seeks to broaden public understanding of the relationship between science, religion, and technology in cross-cultural contexts by engaging with journalists covering religion internationally, and facilitating a dynamic exchange between how scholars and journalists can collaborate.

John Corrigan is the Lucius Moody Bristol Distinguished Professor of Religion and Professor of History at Florida State University. He is the author of many books on religion in America, religion and emotion, religious intolerance, and the spatial humanities, as well as various digital projects and film documentaries. He is visiting at Columbia as a Luce/ACLS fellow while finishing a book, *Religious Intolerance and American Foreign Policy*, and discussing that topic with journalists. His book focuses on how Americans, unable to come to terms with the national record of religious intolerance, have sought over a period of two hundred years to project that failing elsewhere. The U.S. government, accordingly, has been increasingly involved in finding evidence of intolerance in other nations and having done so, attempted, ineffectively, to remedy the problem through State Department promotion of the ideal of religious freedom.

The U.S. promotes religious freedom internationally, believing it a necessary step toward reducing religious violence. The American approach has encountered difficulties, some of which arise from incomplete understandings of the ways in which religion is embedded in culture. Additionally, well-meaning American diplomacy miscalculates the possibilities for the success abroad of an American ideology of religious freedom. That problem derives in part from American amnesia about religious violence in the national past. The national history of religious violence is obscured, screened from official memory even as it is remembered in minority communities that suffered violence. That forgetting has limited American capability to appreciate the complex dynamics of religious intolerance elsewhere. *Religious Violence and American Foreign Policy* will be published as an academic study and will serve as the framework for a documentary about America, religion, and international affairs.



2017-2018 VISITING SCHOLARS

Nadia Fadil is an Associate Professor at the IMMRC (Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre) at the University of Leuven. After having obtained a PhD at this same institute, she has been affiliated as a Postdoctoral Jean Monnet Research Fellow at the European University Institute (2008-2009) and a Visiting Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley (2011-2012). She is currently in the US as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life at Columbia University. Her research centers on the secularisation and racialisation of Islam in Europe, with a particular focus on the lived religious and non-religious practices of Maghrebis in Francophone Europe as well as the governmental regulation of Islam in Europe. She has co-authored a book on the policies of integration in Flanders (*Leeuw in een Kooi. De Multiculturele verbeelding in Vlaanderen*, 2009), and she is currently working on completing an edited volume on the policies of de-radicalisation in the low countries (Belgium and the Netherlands) with Martijn de Koning and Francesco Ragazzi, forthcoming from IB Tauris Press.

Kenichiro Komori is an Associate Professor at Musashi University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of European Studies (in Tokyo, Japan). He has taught history of European thought, including contemporary issues considered from a global perspective. He wrote books and articles on French and German thinkers, especially Jacques Derrida, Sigmund Freud, and Hannah Arendt. He also translated books by Derrida, Drucilla Cornell, and Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (from French or English into Japanese). His current research focuses on the relationship between philosophy and American society, and he conducts historical, philosophical and literary investigation into political and religious problematics from medieval south-east France to today's New York.

Raphaël Liogier is a sociologist (specializing in belief systems, sociology of religion, shifts in values resulting from globalization, and the impact of the internet) and philosopher (theory of knowledge, ethics and new technologies, transhumanism). He is currently a tenured professor at Sciences Po Aix-en-Provence in France (Aix-Marseille University), researcher at Sophiapol (Paris-Nanterre University), and was elected in 2014 to the Collège International de Philosophie in Paris. He was director of World Religion Watch (Observatoire du religieux) from 2006 to 2014, and was the first expert consulted by the French parliament following the Charlie Hebdo attack in 2015. He is a member of UNESCO's International Commission for Peace Research. He is also the author of over 100 scholarly articles and twenty one books.





Kyle Rader is a theologian working on the interpretation and deployment of Christian scriptures. He received his Ph.D. with distinction from the University of Chicago and is currently revising his dissertation on how modernist historical sensibilities inform or constrain efforts to retrieve pre-modern ways of reading. Previously, he received a M.Div. from the University of Chicago and a B.A. from Truman State University.

Emily Sigalow is a sociologist whose work focuses on American religion with a specific emphasis on the social scientific study of contemporary Jewish life. She received her PhD from Brandeis University in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and Sociology (joint degree) in 2015. She is finishing a book project about the historical and contemporary encounter between Judaism and Buddhism in America. This book, *American JUBU: Jews, Buddhists, and Religious Change in the United States* (under contract with Princeton University Press) explains how Judaism and Buddhism met, combined, and changed in relation to each other in America since 1893.

Carol Marie Webster is an artist | activist | scholar whose research focuses on 'the body.' She works at intersections of 'race'/ethnicity, gender, migration, and religion in examination of African Diaspora/Black Atlantic performance and performative articulations of identity and belonging, examining the influence of cultural and social practices on the health and well-being of 'the body' (individual, community, and social). She draws on critical ethnography, womanist methodologies and analyses, and performance studies approaches in conventional research, performance-as-research, and community engagement initiatives. Her recent article "Body as Temple: Jamaican Catholic Women and the Liturgy of the Eucharist" was published in *African Theology: An International Journal* (Jan 2017). She holds a PhD in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies from the University of Leeds (2013) in the United Kingdom and Master's degrees in Religious Studies (2005) and in Cultures and Development Studies (2005) from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium.

2017-2018 IRCPL SUMM

The IRCPL Summer Research Fellowship is awarded each Spring to assist students with expenses directly related to research taking place over the Summer or Fall semester, including travel, lodging, and materials. Upon returning from their travel, students will issue reports on the results of their research. Information on how to apply for an IRCPL Fellowship can be found on our website.

Elizabeth Dolfi is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Religion at Columbia University in the North American Religions subfield. Her primary research interests include feminist and queer studies of American religious history, American evangelicalism, contemporary secularisms, and evangelical heterosexualities. Her current project is a historical and ethnographic study of the motivations, tactics, ideology, and theology of the Christian anti-human trafficking movement. She holds an M.A., M.Phil, and IRWGS Graduate Certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies from Columbia University, an M.A.R. from Yale Divinity School, and a B.A. from Vassar College.

Joshua Donovan is a PhD student in Columbia University's Department of History, where he focuses on the political, social, and intellectual history of the Modern Middle East. His broad research interests include the history and politics of identity in the Middle East, migration, imperialism, human rights, and religion. His dissertation traces the development of competing ideas of identity and nationalism within the Antiochian Greek Orthodox Community in the Levant and the broader diaspora during the first half of the twentieth century. This project is among the first to integrate the contributions of Orthodox Christians into existing scholarship on nationalism and sectarianism, and to place the most salient ideas nurtured by this community in a broader regional and global context.

Luciana Chamorro Elizondo is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University. Her dissertation project investigates the ways popular politics have been reshaped by the return of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) to power in Nicaragua, and in particular, by the politico-theological dimensions of Sandinismo that characterize president Daniel Ortega's rule. Through ethnographic engagement with Sandinista militants as they navigate the vicissitudes of this new political landscape, the dissertation offers a novel perspective on how leftist popular movements in Latin America have sought a new basis for popular legitimacy after the decline of the communist utopia and the rise of neoliberalism. The project questions why so many of them have turned to idioms and political forms borrowed from Charismatic Christianity to mobilize the masses and reinvent a basis of unity for "the people".

John Halliwell is a PhD student at Columbia University. John specializes in the economic history of the Middle East and Islamic economic philosophy. His dissertation delves into the ethos of debt in Islamic law within the context of medieval North Africa. While conventional debates revolve around whether the ubiquity of interest-bearing loans (outright or de facto) in Muslim societies represent a breach of the Quranic prohibition on usury, a creative reinterpretation thereof, or something in-between, John's research puts aside this discussion to examine the dynamics of other kinds of debt which pervade legal discussion, from merchant capitalization of farmers to bodily injury to the bridal dowry to unlawful seizure of another's property – all of which were articulated in the language of debt.

MEMBER RESEARCH FELLOWS

Selaedin Maksut is an MA student in the Department of Religion at Columbia University. His primary research interests include American Muslims and postcolonial theory. Selaedin is interested in Islam in the Balkans and the recent tensions between the long-standing Sufi orders and the newly imported Saudi sponsored clerics and institutions, especially in Macedonia and Kosovo. His project is about the aftermath of Kosovo's war of Independence in 1999, since which the country has seen growing tensions between its traditional Sufi orders and the influx of well-funded Saudi-Wahhabi clerics, students, and institutions.

Tamar Menashe is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at Columbia University, where she works on late medieval and early modern European and Jewish legal, cultural, and religious history and Christian-Jewish relations. Her dissertation explores the intersection of multi-confessionalism and the law in Reformation Germany through cases pertaining to religious conversion between Judaism and Christianity. Drawing on German legal sources, Jewish religious and legal sources, and literary writings of converts, Tamar examines how Christian and Jewish institutions and individuals grappled with contradicting jurisdictional claims, legal and religious reforms, religious toleration and persecution, and notions of minority status and women's status.

Verena Meyer is currently a Ph.D. student in the Department of Religion at Columbia University where she studies the ways that Javanese Muslims understand religious authority of saints and reformer figures, how authority is negotiated theologically, and how it is deployed politically. She employs both ethnographic and textual methods, and draws on Sufism, Islamic reformism, Javanese literary traditions, and the wider currents of Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean Islam. The IRCPL fellowship will support research on Javanese religious literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the fall of 2018.

David Silverberg is an incoming PhD student in the Department of Religion at Columbia University. He is currently finishing his BA in the Department of Middle East, South Asia, and African Studies Department at Columbia. His research centers around questions of law, post-colonial theory, medicine, secularism, and 'minority' religion. His current project critically interrogates a 2015 Rajasthan High Court decision to criminalize a Jain end of life practice of fasting to death, called *sallekhanā* or *sānthara*, as suicide.

Yayra Sumah is a doctoral candidate in the department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies (MESAAS). She holds a B.A. and M.A. in Political Science from Boston University. Her research focuses on Congolese (DRC) history, violence, healing, religious movements and the politics of masculinity and femininity. Her dissertation project seeks to rethink the legacy of colonial violence in Central Africa through a history of the Kimbanguist movement in Belgian Congo (1920-1969). By reconstructing the Kongo cosmological tradition which animated the search for healing, and by historicizing the process by which a movement which was initially religious became politicized through colonial military repression, her project seeks to enrich our understanding of the relationship between religion, politics and agency.

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