The Department of Religious Studies expanded its reach this summer with its first international expedition. In June, Assistant Professor Carrie Duncan led MU students participating in an archaeological excavation at the late Roman-period site of ‘Ayn Gharandal in southern Jordan in collaboration with fellow SEC school, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Duncan came from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is an expert in the study of biblical and ancient Mediterranean religions, particularly their material forms. She has participated in numerous archaeological excavations of ancient Mediterranean sites. In addition to her work at ‘Ayn Gharandal, she has worked on the Petra North Ridge Project, and the Madaba Plains’ Tall al-‘Umayri excavation.

Duncan feels strongly about offering this program to provide students an opportunity for hands-on experience with history. “Reading about the fortification of the Roman Empire’s eastern frontier is much different from finding one of the water flasks from which a soldier drank,” says Duncan. “Learning about Nabatean religious customs isn’t the same as standing in the middle of the Great Temple at Petra. Within that landscape, Nabatean worship of Dushara, the god of the mountain, makes a lot of sense!”

The site of Gharandal preserves one of a long line of military fortresses that protected the eastern edge of the Roman Empire during the reign of Diocletian in the late third century CE. Diocletian is known as having instituted one of the last persecutions of Christians before Constantine legalized the religion in the fourth century. Ancient graffiti found on the walls of the fort’s bathhouse raise the possibility that some of the local soldiers stationed at Gharandal were themselves Christian. An aqueduct brought water from a nearby spring to the fort and its adjacent bathhouse. The 2013 excavation focused, in particular, on the fort’s water system and main gate, where the team hoped to find a dedicatory inscription similar to those discovered at comparable forts.

Students enjoyed a month of digging, touring, and Jordan’s rich cultural heritage. Weekends were spent visiting famous archaeological sites including Petra and Jerash, camping in areas of natural beauty such as Wadi Rum, and experiencing the warm hospitality of the Jordanian people. No previous experience was necessary to participate in this field school, just a positive attitude and a sense of adventure!
By Chip Callahan


It is with great joy and humility that the Department of Religious Studies mails out this issue of Communiqué. It has been a long time coming. A lot has changed in our department over the years since we last sent out a newsletter, and it is my hope that this issue will bring you up to date and let you know that despite our communication silence, we have been active and engaged in exciting endeavors.

I became department chair in fall 2011, following Bob Baum’s three-year term. Under Bob’s leadership and into my term, the department has added some new faculty members while others have left, and we have created some new positions of significance.

This fall we welcome the newest member of our faculty, Carrie Dun­can, who comes to us fresh from the doctoral program in religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Carrie steps into the vacancy in Biblical studies left when Nathaniel DesRosiers accepted a position at Stonehill College in Massachusetts (which also happens to be his alma mater). Her research focuses on the material culture of ancient Judaism and early Christianity, which she explores through archaeological excavations in Jordan (for more, read the story on Page 1) in addition to textual studies.

This year Ed Drott is on research leave in Japan, continuing his studies of religion and health. We are lucky to have Kristina Buhrman filling in for Ed while he is away. Kristina’s area of research is divination in medieval Japanese culture.

Our faculty members are active in national and international organizations and making contributions to the academic study of religion through publications that are getting our department some notice. Our graduate students have been successful, too. Some have continued on in religious studies graduate work after receiving their master’s from our department—recent students have enrolled at Harvard University, Florida State University, and the University of California, Santa Barbara—while others have taken other, no less exciting, paths.

The undergraduate major is thriving, thanks to the hard advising and mentoring work of Bob Flanagan. We revised our curriculum over the past several years, adding a Junior Seminar to the already existing Senior Seminar and the Advanced Theories and Methods course (formerly Modern Perspectives) as requirements for the major, creating the conditions for the earlier development of community among our majors. The Religious Studies Club has also been revitalized and remains an important part of our department culture.

In 2008, the department inaugurated an important new annual lecture series, the Distinguished Lecture on Religion and Public Life. This event, held each spring, hosts an important scholar or public figure whose work has engaged the role or place of religion in the public sphere. We are trying to make video recordings of these lectures available on the department’s Web site. Our speakers so far have included:

- In 2008, Robert Wuthnow, Gerhard R. Andlinger ’52 Professor of Sociology and director of the Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University, presented “The Global Reach of American Christianity”
- In 2009, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, Chancellor Professor of Law, Emory University, presented “Muslims and the Secular State: Dynamics of Majority/Minority Situations”
- In 2010, Mark Juergensmeyer, professor of sociology and director of the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, presented “Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State”
- The lecture was not held in 2011, but in 2012, Mark Chancey, associate professor of religious studies, Southern Methodist University, presented “Edu­cating for a ‘Christian America’: Religion and the Texas Social Studies Controversy”
- And Stephanie Kaza, professor of environmental studies, University of Vermont, presented “Responding to Environmental Challenges: Insights from Zen Buddhism” in 2013.

As we look forward to the coming year, we anticipate both continuity and change. This academic year will see the fourth round of comprehensive exams for our master’s students, and the second year of our new graduate curriculum. We are increasing the capacities of our larger introductory courses with the hope of attracting more interest from a wider swath of potential majors, and we are beginning to explore the possibilities of online learning and teaching as a supplement to our regular course offerings. The department continues to look for ways to become more active with the Danforth Center on Religion and Politics at Washington University and to make stronger connections with the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University.

It is a pleasure to be the chair of such a strong and exciting department. I hope that you will continue to stay in touch and support us as we move ahead.
The Master's Program in Religious Studies

By Signe Cohen

The master’s program at MU is small, but growing. Our program is developing a national reputation and attracts many out-of-state applicants, and the number of applications we receive annually has doubled since 2005.

We are able to offer 11 teaching assistantships with tuition waivers to current and incoming students every year. Additionally, some of our students have won prestigious fellowships from the Graduate School. Josephine Butler and Devon White in 2009, Daniel Tallent in 2010, Diamante Waters in 2011, and Nicholas Barnes, Andrew McKee, Adam Miller, and Abel Gomez in 2012 were awarded full-tuition fellowships.

Many of our former students have been accepted into doctoral programs in religious studies or related fields after they graduate from MU. Former master’s student and popular instructor Justin Arft, BA ’00, MA ’03, is enrolled in the doctoral program in classics at MU. Jon Lanman, MA ’05, received his doctorate from Oxford University and is now a faculty member at Queen’s University in Belfast. Christian Current, MA ’06, received his doctorate in Asian cultures and languages from the University of Texas at Austin in 2012; Richard Pruitt, MA ’07, is enrolled in the theology doctoral program at Regent University; Emily Clark, MA ’09, is enrolled in the doctoral program in religion at Florida State University; Lora Kile, MA ’10, is enrolled in the doctoral program in religion at Arizona State University; Kat Milligan, MA ’10, received a master’s degree in divinity from Harvard University; Diamante Waters, MA ’12, is enrolled in the doctoral program in religion at the University of California, Santa Barbara; Mariam Goshadze, MA ’12, has been accepted into the doctoral program in religion at Harvard University; Jill Hartleip, MA ’13, is enrolled in the anthropology doctoral program at MU; and current master’s student Andrew McKee has been accepted into the doctoral program in religion at Florida State University.

Thad Horrell, BA ’97, MA ’03, is teaching at Front Range Community College in Longmont, Colo.; Crystal Krone, MA ’05, received her doctorate in education in 2011 and is now the director of academic program review at the Missouri Department of Higher Education; Jacob Jones, MA ’08, is an instructor at Montana State University; Justin Hienz, MA ’08, is an independent writer and editor in Washington, D.C.; Henry Imler, MA ’09, has taught at Columbia College, William Woods University, and Moberly Area Community College; Johanna Meetz, MA ’09, is a distance-education librarian at Concordia University in Portland, Ore.; Darren Wright, MA ’11, is a college ministry co-director in Bloomington, Ind. Doug Valentine, MA ’12, is an academic adviser and online instructor at Central Methodist University; and Allison Frey, MA ’12, is an academic adviser at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Current Students

Jesca Scaevola was awarded a supplemental fellowship by the Ancient Studies Committee in May 2013. Adam Miller was awarded the prize for best graduate paper at the Midwest Region of the American Academy of Religion’s annual meeting. Adam’s paper was titled “Charisma as Discourse: An Analysis of Swami Vivekananda’s Discursive Activity.” Jill Hartleip received a 2013 Green Chalk Teaching Award from the Arts and Science Student Council.

Alumnus Profile: Doug Valentine, MA ’12

I came to the Department of Religious Studies at MU in fall 2010 with an interest in Chinese ancestor veneration. The faculty exposed me to multiple other areas of the field, which I quickly absorbed as part of my research interests. While at Mizzou, I researched Chinese ancestors, adoption terminology in the letters of Paul to his early churches, the intersection of fledgling Buddhism and ancestor veneration in India, the role of the Showa Emperor in World War II, and los Dias de los Muertos—the Mexican Days of the Dead. While research has always interested me, my first desire rested with teaching. The department offered many exciting opportunities to hone my skills in front of undergraduates, in classes focused on psychological theories of religion, indigenous religions, the religions of East Asia, and the New Testament. In spring 2012, my practice paid off as I was awarded the Green Chalk Teaching Award from the Arts and Science Student Council.

Though I ultimately decided not to pursue a doctorate in the field, at least not yet, my time in the department further solidified my desire to remain in higher education working with students, in both teaching and administrative capacities. After completion of my master’s degree, I served as a faculty member at the Missouri Scholars Academy, a gifted-education program for top high school sophomores from around the state. In August 2012, I began working at Central Methodist University in Fayette, Mo., as an academic adviser. Most excitingly, I have been tasked with creating a nursing course at Central Methodist focused on issues nurses may face when dealing with practitioners of various religious backgrounds. I am indebted to the faculty in the Department of Religious Studies for allowing me the opportunity to evolve as a student and helping me find my voice and style as an educator. It is through the knowledge I gained at MU that I am able to likewise engage my own students as an adviser and teacher.
Religion, like most of human life, is not neatly separated into social, psychological, and historical components. Rather, all of these are present in every human thought and action. Looking at our disciplines, however, you might miss this fact, as psychologists ignore history and historians ignore psychology. My work over the last decade has convinced me that examining religion through both scientific and humanistic lenses can produce substantial progress in our understanding of this important dimension of human life.

My doctoral work at Oxford, for instance, combined qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as historical and cognitive analyses, to offer a new understanding of atheism in the North Atlantic world. Why does Scandinavia have such a high proportion of non-theists compared to the United States? Why are non-theists in the U.S. more likely to view religion itself as immoral? A historical or cognitive analysis alone does not reach as satisfying an explanation as one examining how particular cultural contexts impact pan-human cognitive mechanisms to produce the patterns we see around us.

And in my new position at the Institute of Cognition and Culture (ICC) at Queen’s University Belfast, my research and teaching continue to demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary approaches. For the last two years, I have been a member of Oxford’s Ritual, Community, and Conflict project, which brings together an international research team of anthropologists, psychologists, historians, and archaeologists, and investigates the role of ritual in human life. More specifically, I have engaged in both psychological experiments and ethnographic field studies to ascertain the effects of ritual on ingroup cohesion and intergroup relations, seeking to discover the precise features of ritual responsible for these effects and the psychological mechanisms that mediate between participation and group commitment.

In addition to research, I am excited to bring an interdisciplinary approach to religion to the classroom as part of the ICC’s master’s in cognition and culture. The ICC is one of the world’s first institutions explicitly dedicated to examining culture from an interdisciplinary perspective. Our master’s students examine both anthropological and psychological literature on a variety of topics including religion, morality, gender, and kinship, and our doctoral students conduct both psychological experiments and ethnographic fieldwork in an effort to better understand the complexities of human life.

I am both excited and grateful for these opportunities in what is rapidly becoming a difficult academic landscape. In particular, I am grateful to the faculty and students in religious studies at MU for helping prepare me for this work. From my initial campus visits to my master’s thesis defense, the MU faculty combined open-mindedness and a critical eye towards the cognitive sciences. This balanced approach encouraged me to develop ways of bridging the differences between the humanistic and scientific study of religion, helped me sharpen my scholarly skills, and prepared me to pursue an interdisciplinary and innovative style of research that will hopefully continue to improve our understanding of religion.

Institute of Cognition and Culture: http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/InstituteofCognitionCulture
Ritual, Community, and Conflict: http://www.icea.ox.ac.uk/large-grants/ritual

—Jon Lanman, MA ’05
From the Outgoing Chair

I served as department chair from August 2008 until August 2011, and it was a time of considerable instability in the department. When I became chair, I had three primary goals: 1. stabilization of the department faculty, 2. growth of the department, and 3. mentoring of junior faculty.

In terms of stabilization, we were able to slow the loss of faculty being lured away to wealthier universities. With Dean O’Brien’s active support, we made attractive counteroffers to some people who then decided to remain at the University of Missouri. We regularized a non-tenure-track position as a teaching assistant professor, offering more stability to someone who had worked here for many years. We were also able to add several new positions: Dennis Kelley returned to us, after several years at Iowa State, to teach Native American religions, as well as courses on myth and ritual. Kate Kelley joined us as well, reviving the field of religion and literature, which had been neglected for several years, ever since Sue Crowley left us to focus on teaching in the Honors College. Finally, we added a new position in Islam. We were fortunate enough to hire Nate Hofer, a specialist in medieval Islamic mysticism, but with a breadth that extended his reach to the modern Middle East and to the long-neglected field of Jewish studies.

We also expanded our online offerings thanks to diligent work by Dan Cohen, Kate Kelley, and Justin Arft. In terms of mentoring junior faculty, that is best measured in terms of our success in getting them promoted and tenured. During my term, we were able to celebrate the promotion and tenure of Chip Callahan, who succeeded me as department chair. Further evidence of successful mentoring is supplied by the significant number of Research Board grants, research leaves, and other grants from within the University System and from external grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, from several Japanese research foundations, and from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion. Of course, this reflects the excellence of our faculty hires as well.

We also continued to be involved in the Difficult Dialogues Program, funded by the Ford Foundation, which promoted the civil discussion of controversial subjects in the classroom and on campus, particularly as they related to religious questions. This project began my first year at MU, and our former chair, Sharon Welch, played an important role in writing the initial proposal. As that funding came to a close, I worked with the Center for Religion and the Professions, created initially by our Professor Emerita Jill Raitt, to carry this into a new project, the World Religions in Missouri project, funded both by the Center and the Missouri Endowment for the Humanities. We ran summer workshops for public school teachers on the growing religious diversity of central Missouri.

I would like to close by saying that there is a man who has been the heart and soul of our program for at least as long as I have been associated with the University of Missouri. Bob Flanagan, our director of undergraduate studies, who has taught some of the most sought-after courses on campus, kept track of our majors’ academic programs; recruited many of our fine majors; offered up his home for departmental gatherings of undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty together or separately; and given tirelessly of his wisdom and humanity to make this department what it is today.

I would be remiss if I did not mention another important contributor to the department. Though she arrived after me, Connie Dunn’s quiet efficiency, support, and dedication to making our lives easier has become so essential to all of us that it would be easy to take it for granted. I could not have done what I did for my three-year term without Bob and Connie’s help.

I spent a delightful year in Washington, D.C., as a residential research fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and was able to leave the department in the capable hands of Chip Callahan, who has shown himself a careful navigator of the uncertain waters that affect all humanities departments at public universities these days. Perhaps it is his work on whaling that allows him to be a successful skipper.

—Robert Baum

In Memory of J. Donald Crowley

By Bob Flanagan

Following the death of Sue Crowley’s husband, J. Donald Crowley, in 2011, several members and friends of the department gathered at the Crowleys’ home to plant a flowering bush in memory of Don, and as an expression of care and affection for Sue. For as long as the department has existed, the Crowley home has been a regular gathering place for its various functions. As words are inadequate to express our gratitude for all that Sue has done and continues to do for religious studies at Mizzou, so they are also inadequate to express gratitude for the generous hospitality, good humor, and stimulating conversation Don always shared with us.

Sue Crowley with the memorial bush in front of her home.
Robert Baum: I continue to work on two books on African religions. Last year I received a Residential Research Fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a grant from the University of Missouri System’s Research Board. The former funded a year residency at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., and the latter funded research trips to Senegal and Ethiopia. I have also published a number of articles. These include a second edition of “Indigenous Religions” in A Concise Introduction to World Religions (Oxford University Press), “Prophet-ess: Alinesitoue as a Contested Icon in Contemporary Senegal,” in Facts, Fiction, and African Creative Imaginations (Routledge), and “Slaves Without Rulers: Domestic Slavery Among the Dio-la of Senegambia,” in African Systems of Slavery (Africa World Press). I received two awards in the past year: the Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Faculty Research and Creative Activity in the Performing Arts and Humanities and The Missouri Humanities Council Governor’s Award for Outstanding Work in Education. Finally, I have been named editor of the Journal of Religion in Africa.

Kristina Buhrman: I come to MU from the University of Southern California, where I was a member of the Project for Pre-modern Japan Studies, the Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, and part of the Science, Technology, and Society initiative. My research is focused on divination in medieval Japanese culture. My dissertation, The Stars and the State: Astronomy, Astrology, and the Politics of Natural Knowledge in Early Medieval Japan, examined the history of astrological observation and calculation in ninth- through 13th-century Japan, a topic that straddles the history of religion and the history of science.

Chip Callahan: I returned to the department in 2011 as chair following a semester-long sabbatical during which I primarily enjoyed the company of my family, including new twin daughters. I continue to work on issues relating to religion and work in the United States and have published several articles on related topics such as “The Work of Class in Southern Religion” in The Journal of Southern Religion (2011) and “Allegories of Progress: Industrial Religion in the United States,” in the Journal of the American Academy of Religion (2010), co-written with Kathryn Lof- ton of Yale University and Chad Seales of the University of Texas at Austin. The entanglements of religion and global trade remain a current interest, which I am exploring through the perspective of the 19th-century whaling industry. Two articles on this topic will be forthcoming this year, and a book is in the works. Perhaps the most fun project that I have been involved with recently is Frequencies: A Collaborative Genealogy of Spirituality, an online exhibit/experiment made up of 100 essays by scholars and artists who were asked what they think of when the they think of the word “spirituality.” My entry titled “Highway” was 70/100 and can be found at http://frequencies.

Dan Cohen: My research and teaching interests include South Asian religions and the increasing interaction between religious studies and neuroscience. As a Fulbright-Hays scholar, I conducted extensive ethnographic research in India on Hindu ancestor-worship rituals and related Hindu ghost-exorcism rituals. My dissertation examines these complex rituals in a series of detailed case studies showing how these practices fit within wider Hindu cosmology. My interest in religion and spirituality also involves ongoing interdisciplinary research at MU, conducted in association with MU colleagues from the School of Health Professions, the Department of Psychological Sciences, the Medical School, and the School of Social Work. Recent collaborative publications include “Right Parietal Lobe-related ‘Selflessness’ as the Neuropsychological Basis of Spiritual Transcendence” in the International Journal for the Psychology of Religion (2012), and “Relationships Among Spirituality, Religious Practices, Personality Factors, and Health for Five Different Faith Traditions” in the Journal of Religion and Health. In 2009, I was the lead author of “Differentiating the Impact of Spiritual Experiences, Religious Practices, and Congregational Support on the Mental Health of Individuals with Heterogeneous Medical Disorders” published in the International Journal for the Psychology of Religion. Finally, I have recently become a Contemplative Studies Faculty Fellow at the University of Missouri as part of my ongoing participation in the Mizzou Advantage Initiative, “Contemplative Studies in Higher Education.”

Signe Cohen: I was awarded summer funding from the UM System Research Board for summer 2011 in order to work on my book, Romancing the Robot: Reflections on Self and Soul in Ancient Indian Literature. I am also working on a book on Harry Potter, magic, and religion, inspired by my popular course on the subject. Still waiting for your Hogwarts letter? The Harry Potter course will be taught again in fall 2013!

Edward Drott: Since joining the department in 2009, I have had a busy and exciting couple of years. I have enjoyed getting to know our students, both graduate and undergraduate, and am gratified by the quality of their work, their high level of engagement in the classroom, and their commitment to thinking through difficult questions carefully and critically. I have been very fortunate over the past few years to have received funding to present papers and conduct research in various fun places around the world. In May 2010, I was very pleased to be invited to present some of my work at a conference in the south of France. That summer I received funding to conduct
research at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya, Japan. And this past summer, I received a grant that allowed me to spend two and a half months in Tokyo at Sophia University.

Carrie Duncan: I joined the faculty at MU from the religious studies department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a specialization in ancient Mediterranean religions. My research focuses on material expressions of religion in the communities of the eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. My dissertation, *The Rhetoric of Participation: Gender and Leadership in Ancient Synagogues*, explored ways in which early Jewish communities used gender in public commemorations to create and reinforce group identities. Other interests include the architectures of asceticism as well as funerary banqueting practices among early Eastern Orthodox Christian and Eastern Diaspora Jewish groups. I conduct field research in Jordan each summer as a senior staff member at three archaeological excavations: the Ayn Gharandal Archaeological Project, the Petra North Ridge Project, and the Tall al-`Umayri excavation of the Madaba Plains Project. I worked with the International Center to create a summer study abroad course that brought Mizzou students to Jordan to learn about archaeology and the rich cultural and religious heritage of the Middle East.

Bob Flanagan: As director of undergraduate studies and teaching assistant professor, I advise both prospective and declared majors and minors in religious studies about their opportunities and responsibilities as students at Mizzou. When appropriate, I also advise and counsel members of the general student population who contact me with a variety of questions and concerns. In response to the suggestion of a former chair of the department, I proposed, organized, and lead the majors seminar for religious studies majors. I am the faculty adviser of the Religious Studies Club and for a student organization for atheists and agnostics. I continue to teach the freshman course, *Introduction to Religion*. I also serve as a resource for local and regional religious communities. In 2011, I received the Arts and Science Student Council Blue Chalk Award for outstanding advising.

Rabia Gregory: Since completing my doctorate and moving to Columbia in fall 2007, I’ve been awarded several research grants. These have enabled me to dedicate my time to finishing my first book, *Marrying Jesus*, which examines how the belief that each individual Christian was created a bride of Christ was popularized in late medieval and early modern Germany and the Netherlands. My next book project *Pulp Mysticism*, will explore the blending of Biblical and urban imagery in 15th- and 16th-century vernacular devotional literature. I have an essay about religion and video games forthcoming in *Playing with Religion and Digital Gaming* (Indiana University Press) and have presented my work on the culture and literature of late medieval convents at several national and international academic conferences. In 2009, I spent six weeks in Europe doing research in Germany, Belgium, and the UK, as one of 15 participants in a National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar.

Dennis Kelley: My research encompasses the broad discourse regarding religions of indigenous peoples. In theorizing indigeneity, I have developed a theoretical framework using the categories place, sacred power, and protocol. Drawing on diverse theoretical treatments of religious culture and indigeneity, as well as on theories regarding modernity, globalization, and postcolonialism, I have produced work that draws these themes into conversation with one another, bringing them to bear on issues of contemporary American Indian spirituality, especially among urbanized communities. My current project, a book manuscript titled *Ancestral Ways, Modern Selves: Tradition, Performance, and Religion in Indian Country*, will draw the theoretical approaches applied to tribal-specific contexts into conversation with pan-Indian practices associated with urbanized and other non-reservation-based Indian communities.

Kate Kelley: I have two kids; they are super cute. I turned 40 recently, so I got a new tattoo. In the last year I have had my first publications: two book reviews for the *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* (one in print and one in review), and one for *Extrapolation* (in review). I have also submitted three encyclopedia articles: “Women and Religion” in *The Encyclopedia of Women in Today’s World* (appears in the print edition) and “Rastafariansm” and “New Atheism” are in review for *The Multimedia Encyclopedia of Women in Today’s World* (digital edition). I am currently writing my dissertation, *The Infinite Frontier: Soteriological and Eschatological Meaning in Science Fiction*, through Lancaster University. I enjoy long naps on the beach and sunsets in front of the fireplace.
By Bob Flanagan
Courses in religious studies continue to be popular among undergraduate students at Mizzou, with the demand routinely exceeding the supply. This is the case in spite of continuing efforts by the department to provide opportunities for increasing numbers of students to enroll. The Department of Religious Studies continues to attract majors who are excellent students and have significant differences in experience, interest, and aspiration.

One positive development in the experience of majors in religious studies has been participating in the Junior Seminar. In this seminar, majors have taken advantage of the opportunity to become much better acquainted with other majors and to develop a community of inquiry.

An outgrowth of Junior Seminar has been the revival of the Religious Studies Club (RSC). Two major goals of the RSC are to achieve a better balance between social, service, and academic interests, and to attract non-majors who are interested in learning more about religions and those who study them.

Undergraduate Awards
Each year, the department selects two senior majors to be recognized as the Paula and Larry Chapman Scholars in Religious Studies. In 2011, those students were Hannah Rubin and Melissa Graves. In 2012, the department gave the Chapman award to Thomas Blattel and Lauren Breckenfelder. This spring, Cat Newhouse and Kelly Joyce were awarded the Chapman.

The department also gives a Community Service Award to an outstanding major each spring. In 2011, the department chose David Landwehr, Jen Mason in 2012, and Haylea Craigmiles in 2013.

Congratulations to Luke Welch, chosen by the CIEE South Korea Scholarship program to receive a full scholarship to study at Yonsei University in South Korea over spring break.

Congratulations to Cat Newhouse, who won the prestigious Honors College Outstanding Senior Award in spring 2013.

MU Religious Studies Club
Mizzou’s Religious Studies Club offers great opportunities to meet new people and become active in the community. Our purpose is to increase awareness regarding cultural diversity and community service. We have monthly meetings to discuss upcoming volunteer and social events. RSC coordinates group volunteer projects in Columbia, including the Ronald McDonald House. Additionally, RSC holds frequent socials (with free pizza) to bring together students from various backgrounds. These events provide excellent opportunities for students to interact with faculty members in a relaxed setting. RSC attracts students of all majors and everyone is welcome. If you have any questions regarding the club or would like to be added to our contact list, please e-mail Kelly Joyce at kjkwv8@mail.missouri.edu.