

CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN RELIGION & SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Religion, Racism, and Rivalry in North American Chinatowns, 1896-1916

Zhongping Chen

Faculty Fellow

My research interest in this project started with my inquiry into a photo of the arch that the local Chinese of Victoria built for the visit of the governor general of Canada, the Marquis of Lorne, to the city in 1882. On the arch, a central board included three Chinese characters, meaning “the kingdom of the great Qing [China]”. One Chinese verse on the arch read: “Pacify barbarians and worship China”, although it was soon removed. It is a familiar story that Chinese immigrants suffered from white racism in Canada at that time, but does this verse show that these Chinese immigrants harboured racial prejudice against the white “barbarians” and expected the Canadian governor general to worship the Chinese empire in the local Chinatown? This question led me to this project on religion and racism in the political rivalry between reformers and revolutionaries in North American Chinatowns from 1896 to 1916.

The major reformist leader, Kang Youwei (1858-1927), began to promote Confucianism as a world religion from 1886 and then led the first but failed political reform in Qing China in 1898. After his arrival in Victoria

as an exile in 1899, Kang led an overseas Chinese political reform advocating for constitutional monarchy in China. Kang tried hard to bring Chinese Christians from North American Chinatowns into his reformist cause. But he still promoted Confucianism as the world religion for all “races” and as the state religion of China at the expense of other religious faiths. The Confucian ethnocentrism and anti-Christian bias quickly drove North American Chinese Christians away from his reformist cause, contributing to its failure around 1909.

In contrast, Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) was a baptized revolutionary leader and would become the first president of Republican China in 1912. His party developed its first and second North American branches only among Chinese Christians in 1896 and 1904, and his first visit to Canada in 1897 also enjoyed a courteous reception from Chinese Methodist churches in Vancouver, Nanaimo, and Victoria. In 1904, Sun turned a pro-reform Chinese Christian newspaper in San Francisco into a pro-revolution one, and his revolutionary propaganda received support from another Christian newspaper in Vancouver’s Chinatown from 1906. But Sun’s revolutionary party defeated reformist faction in North American Chinatowns mainly through its racialized propaganda against the Qing government, including the denouncement of its Manchu ruling minority as barbarian and backward aliens. As a result, the revolutionary movement won popular support among many North



Arch on Store Street in Victoria, BC, 1882 (Royal BC Museum, BC Archives, A-02846)

American Chinatowns, including the Chinese Freemasons. Sun actually achieved one of his greatest fundraising successes through the support of the Canadian headquarters of the Chinese Freemasons in Victoria in 1911. Thereafter, the rivalry between Sun’s party and Kang’s group along religious lines continued and led to their violent clash in Victoria in late 1916.

This project will examine how anti-Christian cultural racism and biological racism against the Manchu affected the rivalry between reform and revolution in North American Chinatowns and Chinese political culture as a whole.

Decentering Secularism: Spirituality in Modern Art

Jessica Ziakin-Cook

In my research, I waded into the contemporary debate in art history about the role of the spiritual in modernism. Scholars such as Charlene Spretnak and Thomas Crow have illustrated and called for an end to the “reigning interdiction on theology in modern art history”. Since at least the middle of the 20th century, however, the focus on personal expression and phenomenological experience—indeed, the sheer anti-metaphysicality of much of North Atlantic mid-century art—seemed to precipitate the final abandonment of a theological lens with

[CONTINUED ON P. 5]



The Gate of Harmonious Interest, entrance to Chinatown in contemporary Victoria, BC

CSRS UPDATES



Message from the Acting Director

Kathy Chan

On July 1st 2022, Paul Bramadat embarked upon a well-earned sabbatical, and I embarked upon a one-year adventure as acting director of the CSRS. The CSRS community of staff, fellows, supporters, and self-described ‘hangers-on’ is already pleasantly familiar to me. I was a faculty fellow in 2015 and 2021, and served as a member of the CSRS Program Committee from 2017-2022. I have experienced the social and intellectual benefits of discussing everything from the First Amendment to jazz riffs over coffee, and have attended a great number of the centre’s stimulating public events. So I am excited to have moved across the Ring Road from my office at the Faculty of Law to serve as acting director of the CSRS until July 2023.

As usual, the CSRS will host fellows from all over the world this year: China, Turkey, Nigeria and various parts of Canada. These fellows are undertaking projects that span the disciplinary as well as the geographic map: from law, English literature and history, to social work and the fine arts. Our weekly public lectures will provide you with an opportunity to hear about these diverse research projects.

We will also be hosting a number of special events this year. In October, we are partnering with the Religion, Culture and Society

Program to bring in Philip Jenkins, who will deliver a set of virtual Lansdowne lectures on Climate, Catastrophe and Faith. In March, Sa’diyya Shaikh will travel to Victoria from South Africa to deliver the Distinguished Lecture in Islam. In May 2023, as part of the John Albert Hall series, we will be co-hosting a workshop with the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets. The workshop will focus on the use, regulation, and stewardship of church property in a context of rapid secularization, dwindling congregations, and demands for decolonization and racial justice.

Research tells us that religious institutions are in decline, and that the number of persons who claim to have no religion is climbing. Yet these patterns are not universal. Even in Canada, where these patterns are prevalent, they do not entail the disappearance of religion from private or public life. Spiritual beliefs and practices continue to evolve in manners specific to their societies, and to coexist with nonbelief and the secular. I invite you to join us throughout the upcoming year to explore these evolutions, and to learn about the fascinating research CSRS fellows are doing on religion, spirituality, and society.

Tracing the National Dimensions of a Global Religious Phenomenon

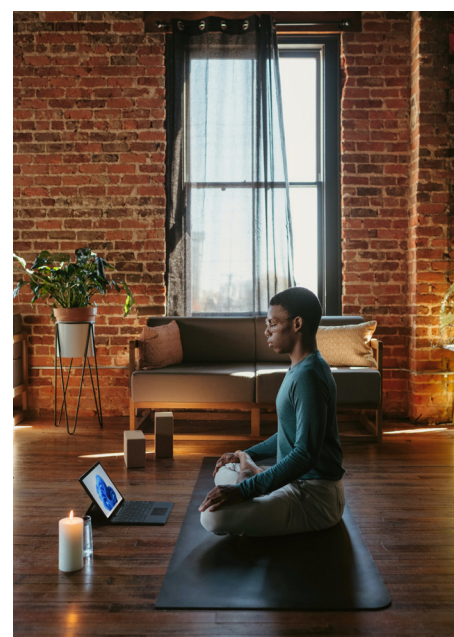
Paul Bramadat

This summer at the CSRS we begin work on our next large research project, *Global Spiritualities, Local Bodies: Modern Postural Yoga in Canada and the United States*, funded by an Insight Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. I’m the Principal Investigator and will be looking at the impact of distinctly national norms and policies on religious/spiritual practices and ideas that have spread rapidly into a great many societies.

“Modern postural yoga” (MPY)—a term coined by Elizabeth de Michelis—is the most popular expression of contemporary yoga in Europe and North America. I would speculate that in common parlance in the west, “yoga” is synonymous with the movement- and breath-oriented emphasis of MPY. In the US and Canada, there are roughly 45 million practitioners. Of course, for many students and teachers, MPY is mainly a form of exercise. However, a good number of these people frame their practice in what they,

and we, could call “spiritual” terms, or at least they are drawn to MPY because of its real or imagined connections with Indic practices and spiritual traditions.

Some would argue that MPY is a brazenly commercialized and increasingly banal “secular” commodity with less and less connection to its religious or spiritual roots. If this is the case, then we might expect it to be practiced, taught, and discussed by students and teachers around the world in more or less the same way. However, it is also possible that distinctive national norms and policies might have a meaningful impact on the ways MPY communities take shape and the meanings insiders attribute to the practice. I am not committed to either possibility – indeed, either one of them will alter some of



the public and scholarly consensus around this rapidly growing practice.

Between August-December 2022, we will visit comparable cities (Indianapolis and Winnipeg; New York and Toronto; Los Angeles and Vancouver) to determine if there is an appreciable difference between the ways Americans and Canadians frame MPY. We’ll be particularly curious about the impact on this popular form of spirituality of each society’s distinctive approach(es) to race/appropriation, healthcare policies, and the autonomy of women. When we submitted this application to SSHRC last fall, our societies’ approaches to healthcare and

race/racism seemed to be the most obvious differences to trace. Nonetheless, when the US Supreme Court dramatically altered the country's approach to reproductive freedom this May, it became clear that this might have an impact on the ways US women (the vast majority of students and teachers) think about and promote MPY.

With help from our fieldwork, an international survey we will launch beforehand, and conversations we will have with colleagues in our local, national, and international CSRS network we should learn a great deal about MPY, Canadian and American social and political differences, and the changing shape of religion and spirituality (and as well as the appropriate methods to use to study such rapidly changing phenomena). I look forward to sharing the results of this project as they roll in.

If you're interested in the project, please check out this Q and A: <https://www.uvic.ca/news/topics/2022+expert-qa-yoga-spirituality+expert-advisory>

If you are a yoga student in Canada or the US, please fill out the survey: <https://paulbramadat.qualtrics.com/.../SVe9fPm3fC6zI5D7w>



Publications and Partnerships

Rachel Brown

We have another exciting year on the publications front. The editors of our volume on Indigenous spiritualities in the public sphere, tentatively titled *Opening and Closing Relations: Indigenous Spirituality in Canada*, have been hard at work editing the fine contributions to the volume and we hope to submit to University of Toronto Press this academic year. We are also hard at work on an edited journal issue based on our Health Humanities workshop that we hosted in October 2021. The editors are reviewing the articles now and will aim to submit the special issue to the journal by the end of 2022.

The Centre continues to be involved in multiple academic partnerships that expand our network and our research projects. The new SSHRC Insight project on modern postural yoga will bring the centre into the orbit of yoga studies scholars across North America such as Adheesh Sathaye at UBC, Andrea Jain at Indiana University, and Christopher Jain Miller at Loyola Marymount University.

We continue our collaboration with Lori Beaman's "Nonreligion in a Complex Future" project, attending seminars and looking toward planning a research meeting at the Centre next year.

Paul Bramadat is a co-investigator (with colleagues in Australia, Spain and Canada) on a major proposal submitted to the Australian Research Council, which investigates new spiritualities in Australia.

Bramadat will also be a co-investigator on a project with Géraldine Mossière, a colleague at the Université de Montréal. This proposal will be submitted to SSHRC in the fall, and will focus on the nature and broader implications of the growing movement of "spiritual coaches" in Quebec and British Columbia. Bramadat will also work with a colleague from Spain to host two sessions on spiritual wellness discourses around the world, to be offered at the International Society for the Sociology of Religion meetings in Taiwan in 2023. All of these partnerships and projects will bring exciting new fellows and publications to the CSRS community in the coming years, so keep an eye out for developments.



On Campus Collaborations

Andrew Wender

The Religion, Culture and Society (RCS) Program, an interdisciplinary undergraduate teaching unit in UVic's Faculty of Humanities, is pleased to further its close collaboration with the CSRS through the co-hosting of two guest lecturers in Fall 2022.

On September 22, John A. McGuckin will discuss "Orthodoxy in Kiev and Moscow: History of an Ecclesial Union or Subjugation?". Recently author of *The Eastern Orthodox Church: A New History* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 2020), Prof. McGuckin is based at the University of Oxford, as well as New York's Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary. He promises to offer indispensable insight into the historical and contemporary, religious implications of the Russia-Ukraine War. This lecture will be specially offered during the customary morning "coffee talk" time due to the speaker's virtual presentation from Oxford, UK.

On October 20 as well as October 25,

Lansdowne Visiting Speaker Philip Jenkins will be presenting virtually on "Climate, Catastrophe, and Faith: How Changes In Climate Drive Religious Upheaval". Distinguished Professor of History, and Co-Director of the Program on Historical Studies of Religion, Institute for Studies of Religion, Baylor University, Dr. Jenkins features a new book by this title (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2021). His attention to the deep, long-running interplay between religion and climate change goes to the heart of the RCS's and CSRS's shared concern with such a relationship as that between religion and the environment. This two-part lecture series will be virtual only and take place during the usual 5:00pm lecture slot.

RESEARCH

Conceptualizing the History of Love from a Perso-Islamic Perspective

Aqsa Ijaz
Graduate Fellow

The history of the concept of love has predominantly been theorised from the limited point of view of medieval European literature and its ideal of *amor courtois*, or “courtly love”. In his widely read book, *Love in the Western World*, Denis de Rougemont asserts: “Metaphorically speaking, the human heart is strangely sensitive to variations in time and place. What we call “passionate love” is unknown in India and China. They have no words to render this concept.” De Rougemont is not alone in dehumanizing non-Western societies by claiming that love, as we know it, only emerged with the troubadours in the 12th century. Too many scholars working on the history of emotions persist in this line of eurocentric thinking, whether or not they



Shirin Examines the Portrait of Khusraw (miniature from the manuscript *Khamasa* by Nizami), 1431, gouache, 23.7 x 13.7 cm, Timurid Dynasty, Iran (Hermitage Museum).

sympathise with De Rougemont’s superficial assessment of eros as a death-drive, or take a more positive view of love as that which has informed countless struggles of freedom and emancipation in various western and non-western cultures.



Khusrau and Shirin playing polo. Opaque watercolour. Mughal style. 1726 British Library.

In my work, I challenge the eurocentric assumptions that shape a good deal of the scholarly writing about the history of the phenomenon of romantic love. I propose a shift in our theoretical perspective and philological gears. I argue that classical Persian narrative poetry (*masnavi*) and its vibrant reception in various Persianate cultures is fertile soil in which to re-theorise the history of passionate love. Embedded in the nuanced study of the multilingual and multicultural world of Islamicate *belles lettres* is a tradition that does not easily translate into the poetics of the all too familiar *amor courtois*

In my dissertation, *Shaping the Language of Love: The Afterlife of Nizāmi Ganjavi’s Khusrau ū Shirin in Hindustān*, I approach the proposed task of re-theorizing the concept of love through a uniquely Perso-Islamic perspective. I focus on the 12th century Persian poet, Nizāmi of Ganja and his most celebrated love poem, *Khusrau ū Shirin*, studying its reception among its North Indian readers between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the heart of my work is the desire to understand how literary works with unique philological histories and diverse cultures of interpretation come to inform our way of being in the world and render our emotional experience meaningful.

Translating the Experience of Shabbat

Matthew Ponak
Community Sabbaticant

“Never in the history of calming down has anyone calmed down by being told to calm down.” — anonymous.

This quote begs the question: how can we relax? For thousands of years, the Jewish tradition has offered a simple answer: Shabbat. Each week for one day, Jewish practitioners rest, delight their bodies, and refresh their spirits. Outside the synagogue service, a core element has always been shared meals. Held by blessings, filled with delicacies, and punctuated with songs, the art of calming down and rejoicing around a shared meal with friends and family is a unique and priceless experience. My project at CSRS has been to translate — both linguistically and culturally — this at-home ritual for spiritual seeking communities of any background and to open it up to be practiced any day of the week.



In the form of a small table-top booklet, I wrote new blessings and songs, designed to be recited and sung in groups. The songs are written to familiar tunes in the contemporary Western canon. That means that English-speaking communities and families can accessibly experience the tradition of singing Shabbat zmirot: hymns of appreciation, ecstasy, and humour. It is my hope that this roadmap for at-home ritual will help others tap into the universal message of an oasis in time.



Jessica Ziakin, *Annunciation to St. Ann (after Giotto)*, 2017

regards to the history of art. Theology and spirituality, although originally conceived together, have become separated under the pressures of modernism. Nevertheless, spiritual concerns persist in art, and a theological lens will allow historians of 20th and 21st century art to more fully articulate the spiritual foundations and impacts of the visual arts of our own era. My research shows that art, theology and spirituality are deeply related, and that any art history of the 20th and the 21st century that denies how theology and spirituality impact the creation of a work is incomplete.

The modern, anarchist-catholic thinkers I will examine in this paper, Simone Weil and Cecil Collins, were interested in art as a vocational responsibility, and are careful examiners of the metaphysical mechanics at play between religion and the arts. By exploring the alternative modernism of Anglo-Catholicism, and its distinct theology of sacramentalism, I will demonstrate Anglo-Catholicism's deep thought about the connection between materiality and the sacred, providing incisive tools for postsecular discussions about the persistent connection between art, spirituality and the crises of meaning in modernism.

Fields of Hope

Jason Ellsworth
Graduate Fellow

In the fall of 2018, I stood in a stairwell gazing out a set of windows in southern

Taiwan. I was on a Buddhist pilgrimage called "The Origins of Our Hope". Chatting with another international attendee, we admired the pesticide-free fields that surrounded the facility. Fields planted in a sustainable fashion, part of a project inspired by the Buddhist teachings of a monk who envisioned the area as a Buddhist educational hub to help create and maintain a more compassionate, ecologically friendly, and humane world built on Buddhist values.

At that very moment as we stood looking out at the fields, hundreds of people from all over the world were downstairs buying products



Sustainable fields, Taiwan, 2018

labeled organic and non-GMO at Leezen—a chain of Buddhist vegetarian grocery stores described as "social enterprises." Many of the products have backstories steeped with Buddhist narratives – some of which we heard about in videos and lectures at the retreat. I discovered that products were also available at one of the chain's newest locations in a small province on the east coast of Canada where a large contingent of monks, nuns,

laypeople, and their new Master recently migrated.

The Buddhist community on Prince Edward Island has received much positive publicity for their animal sanctuaries, vegetarian restaurant, charitable food programs, organic agricultural enterprises, social enterprises, and substantial support of PEI organic agriculture. Yet, the rapid development and migration to an island with a small Buddhist population has created barriers to integration similar to those experienced by other international Buddhist communities in Canada. Those who come from away are often treated as "other". Tensions revolve around land ownership and how the Buddhists are at times viewed as too "corporate." Friction develops at the intersection of Buddhist values and mainstream economic practices.

All of this comes together in my multi-sited ethnographic research, *Dharma Ventures: Global Buddhism, Social Enterprises and Value(s)*. Following the movement of people, foodstuffs, and ideas, it explores the compatibilities, tensions, and contradictions that take place across transnational networks. It links studies on Buddhism to research on food commodities and what they tell us about local, regional, and global cultural and economic connections, and to anthropological questions and debates about how values are articulated, envisioned, and used in daily life.

As we were about to return to the prayer hall, the other pilgrimage attendee looked out on the field with a smile on their face, turned to me, and stated how amazing it would be if someday PEI became a fully organic island. Two islands on opposite sides of the world in that moment were connected by the hope for a better world and the question of how to enact social change.

RESEARCH



The Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee in New York. Photo courtesy of The People's Supper.

Around the Table: Exploring the Relationship between Food, Belonging, Spirituality and Social Justice through Dinner Dialogues

Cindy Holmes
Faculty Fellow

Gathering for a meal, formally or informally, is a ritual that is a central part of human cultures. The food feeds our bodies. The gathering can feed something else—our sense of understanding one another, our sense of our shared humanity, our sense of community.

The past ten years have seen the rise of intentional dinner dialogues across North America. Their aim is to gather people across difference to, as The People's Supper says, "create healing spaces that strengthen our individual and collective resilience and wellbeing, and to repair the breach in our interpersonal relationships across political, ideological and identity differences".

This seems especially urgent in an increasingly fractious and segmented society where hate-motivated violence against many communities is on the rise.

What is the power of shared meals, dialogue and storytelling, to build community, deepen understanding, and create healing across differences of race, gender, sexuality, culture,

age and faith? The shared meal as sacred space and site for healing is a repeated theme across dinner dialogues. My project centres around interviews with leaders from different dinner dialogue projects, edited and presented as a podcast series.

The kinds of dialogue vary greatly, and include:

- interfaith;
- within Indigenous communities and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people;
- intergenerational within lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer communities;
- within communities responding to stigma and substance use;
- young adults grieving the loss of a parent;
- newcomers and refugees about migration;
- addressing anti-Black and anti-Muslim

racism; and

- among Two-Spirit, queer and trans communities of colour.

Power inequities and marginalization can also shape experiences at the table. For example, transphobia limits access to many faith-based community food initiatives for trans people and the dinner table can be a site of exclusion through the presence of racist behaviours.

Many intentional dinner dialogues encourage collective guidelines to support the creation of "brave space", recognizing that the idea of "safe space" is an illusion particularly for those experiencing multiple forms of marginalization.

This project serves as phase one of a larger research initiative on food justice in collaboration with community partners Fionna Chong (Vancouver Community College) and Leslie Williams (The Sharing Farm). Our project builds on our existing relationships with 2SLGBTQ, Indigenous, newcomer and refugee communities, Muslim and Christian communities, farmers and food producers.

We will examine the socio-cultural and spiritual impact these intentional dinner dialogues have in their communities. The heart of the project will consist of interviews with key North American community leaders from the groups above structured as a ten-episode podcast. We will explore how organizers understand i) the relationship between food sharing, dialogue, spirituality and social justice, and ii) the impact the dinner dialogues have on individual, community and spiritual wellbeing. Podcasts are a lively form of collaborative inquiry, public scholarship, and research dissemination, and can also be a meaningful tool for community engagement, spiritual formation and religious education.



UMass-Amherst's Advocacy, Inclusion, and Support Programs. Photo courtesy of the People's Supper.



Rama and Sita with Lakshmana and Hanuman. c. 1765. Artstor, library.artstor.org/asset/ACSAA_MICHIGAN_1039428218

Gender and Devotion to Ram and Sita

Anna Lee White

2021-2022 Katherine Young Travel Award

In Hindu traditions in North India, the gods Krishna and Ram are often depicted in very different ways despite both being incarnations of Vishnu. Krishna is seen as the exemplar of playfulness, and popular art and poetry depicts him either as a mischievous child or playing flute, dancing, and playing pranks on all the women who are in love with him. Ram, on the other hand, is seen as an ideal king and an upholder of morality and righteousness. His marriage with Sita, as told in the Ramayana, is upheld as the ideal marriage and Sita is seen as the ideal wife who is endlessly devoted to him.

My doctoral research focuses on the history and development of the Ramanandi

community, a Hindu *bhakti* (devotional) community that is closely associated with devotion to Ram. One branch of the Ramanandi community is called the Ram

rasik tradition, and this predominantly-male ascetic tradition interprets the story of Ram and Sita in a way that is heavily influenced by Krishna devotional traditions. The Ram *rasiks* write poetry and perform ritual reenactments of the Ramayana from the perspective of Sita's female friends, servants, and family members who have unique access and insight into the royal couple's marriage. Ram *rasiks* sometimes take on female personas for this practice, using female pennames and sometimes dressing as women in ritual contexts.

During my stay at CSRS, I worked on translating and interpreting early-twentieth century hagiographies of Ram *rasik* saints written in the language Braj Bhasha, a predecessor to modern standard Hindi. In my dissertation, I plan to further explore the role of gender in the Ramanandi community's assertion that devotion to Ram can overcome all social barriers.



Krishna in popular culture

The Distinguished Lecture in Islam

We are excited to announce that the Distinguished Lecture in Islam will return in 2023. **Sa'diyya Shaikh**, associate professor in the Department for the Study of Religions at Cape Town University in South Africa will deliver the lecture "An Ethics of Love and Justice: Islamic Feminist Reflections" in person at UVic on Thursday, March 23, 2023. Hold the date! The Distinguished Lecture in Islam highlights the work of an eminent scholar working in fields related to Islamic studies. A fund supporting this lecture series was established in 2007 by an anonymous donor who wished to increase the community's understanding of Islam.



Sa'diyya Shaikh will deliver the 2022-23 CSRS Distinguished Lecture in Islam.

RESEARCH

Ireland of the Soul: Renegotiating Domains Private and Public in Modern Irish Poetry

Lucie Kotesovska
Graduate Fellow

In the modern history of Ireland, politics as well as religion have been notoriously contested domains. In my research, I would like to reflect upon this fact from a slightly different perspective, turning to the medium of poetry for fresh insight and understanding of the conflicted situation. In his poem titled “The Settle Bed”, Seamus Heaney commemorates an especially bulky piece of furniture which used to be handed down as a part of the dowry in Northern Ireland and recalls it as the site of the “sigh-life of Ulster”. However, while reflecting upon the painful heritage of his people and his country reaching beyond his lifetime, he nevertheless continues towards what can be seen as no



Belfast Shipyard. Photo credit: Niall_Majury

even add that it is this moment of synthesis that their poetry truly comes into its own as a new quality of internalizing the given conflict is introduced.

The background of the poets whose work I am going to analyze is varied. In the case

Heaney's contemporary, are quite different. Coming from a Protestant family, he first publishes poetry which is instilled—due to the pressing political and religious history of his community—by a dispirited sense of belatedness, emotional avoidance and almost inaudible apologia for his people. Only as this subdued modality gradually turns into a wary yet generous embrace of the phenomena of our post-modern world, does Mahon successfully authorize his version of negotiating the public/private divide.

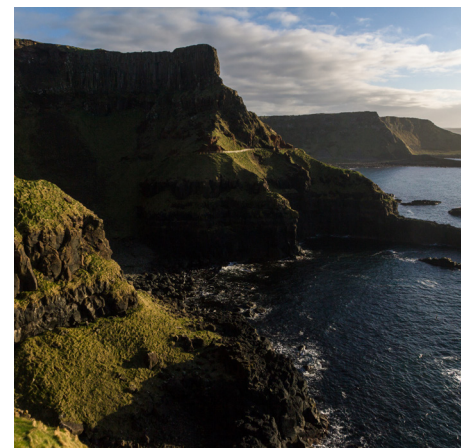
Apart from the more specifically spiritual aspects of this project, I believe that through these analyses centered on the individual poets and their work, the *politicum* of the Irish matter might be reconsidered with fresh subtlety. The reader might realize with new insight why the work of these world-known poets possesses at once a strong imprint of their milieu and a lasting universal appeal.



Ulster countryside, Northern Ireland

less that an act of radical hope: “[W]hatever is given can always be reimagined”. I consider these words as a motto of my own research. I would like to explore the ways in which one's spirituality, working upon and through the medium of poetry, might actively renegotiate the given boundaries between public idiom and private experience in matters political and religious. I focus on the work of several Irish poets, including Heaney and Derek Mahon, as they develop their specific vision and expression over the years. I believe that their poetry reaches a point when a remarkable synthesis of the two worlds—public and private, shared and idiosyncratic, external and internal – is attained. I would

of Seamus Heaney, we encounter poetic sensibility formed and deeply affected by the Catholic faith and idiom of his youth. This early inspiration remains with(in) him for decades to come as “the inner lining of the self”, but is ultimately transformed as the inclusiveness of the poet's consciousness expands and his life experience intensifies. The resulting expression of his renewed spirituality is evident, for instance, in the sequence “Squarings”. Here the poet's joy as he locates his very own territory quite apart from any prescribed public agenda or partisanship is evident in his new confidence in language as well as his adoption of a unique stanza form, the douzain. The roots and perceived affiliation of Derek Mahon,



Northern Ireland Coast. Alexey Komarov, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Tracing Talisman: Power Politics and Religion in Late Edo and Meiji Japan

Tanya Brittain
Graduate Fellow

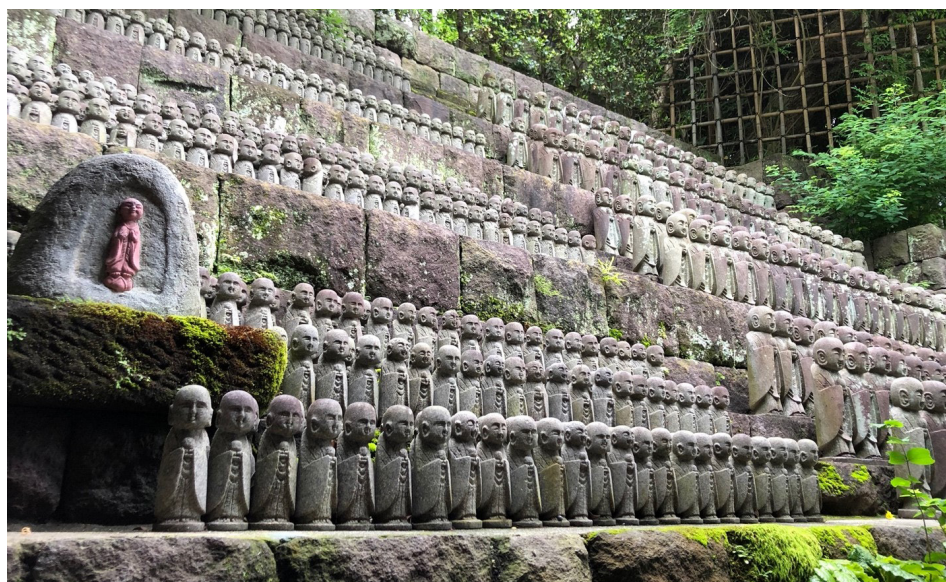
This project explores the production and use of talismans in central Japan from 1800 to 1912, asking two fundamental questions: how were talismans seen to work and what happened to their production and use through the late Edo (*Bakumatsu* 1853-1867) and Meiji (1868-1912) periods? The Meiji was a time of tremendous political change with major implications for religious institutions. It appears, however, that while



Ema tablets at Toyokawa Inari Betsuin in Tokyo, July 2022

political and institutional structures shifted dramatically, and newfound ideas of religion entered Japan from the 'West', many religious practices were labeled as 'superstitious' (Jp. *meishin*). Yet talismans remained in use. The prominence of these objects in Japan today, I suggest, is evidence of this.

Religion in Japan is, like anywhere, a fluid concept built on wide-array of values and beliefs that have changed over time. Today, most people in Japan would not self-identify as religious or claim to be Shintoist or Buddhist. Yet those same people can be found attending temples and shrines, and performing 'religious acts'. At any given moment at any given temple or shrine there



Jizō statuary at Hase-Dera temple in Kamakura, June 2022

is sure to be found someone praying, offering incense or candles, and purchasing talismans of some sort that serve a wide range of purposes. Where do these practices come from? How have they survived centuries of 'modernization' and urbanization, and particularly the Meiji Restoration? What sorts of influences contributed to the way talismans are used, produced, and even look?

Historically, talismans were powerful tools used in Buddhist, Shintō, Onmyōdō, and Shugendō rites and served various aims. They were perceived as efficacious in performing exorcisms, securing childbirth, attending to medical ailments, and so forth. These objects were used primarily for healing and protection. Sometimes they were stamped with a seal or written out by hand on paper with specific colour of ink by a religious professional. They were often burned and the ashes ingested or scattered, but they may also have been worn on one's person or mounted on a wall.

Talismans like the *ofuda*, *omamori*, *ema*, and *omikuji* are regarded as potent implements—apotropaic devices used to ward off danger, misfortune, and wrathful deities, thaumaturgical implements for performing divination and producing desired effects (e.g., good luck, success in exams, etc.), and prophylactic objects used for various health related concerns. They are also used to petition local gods (*kami*) and buddhas. These items remain prominent fixtures in contemporary Japan. This raises the question of what transformations occurred during the Meiji period. Amidst the political upheaval



Omikuji slips at Sensōji Temple in Asakusa (Tokyo), June 2022

RESEARCH

Pentimenti: Ceramic Funeral Vessels as Biographies of Spiritual Homecomings

Holly Ratcliffe

CSRS Artist-in-Residence

My project at the CSRS is an exploration, through the creation of a series of ceramic funeral vessels, of personal stories of returning home to abandoned roots of belief and spiritual practice in hospice care and other end of life contexts.

As an emerging ceramic artist with a background in both anthropology and theology, I am particularly drawn to the creation of funeral vessels as objects of mysterious symbolic significance. So many of our customary attitudes toward death and its meaning or lack of meaning can be focused on this object. And these attitudes can stand in stark contrast with the rich meanings and aesthetic power of funeral vessels from other ages and cultures. Part of my work, then, is not just the creation of artistic work, but the conversations that people have with me in the presence of such pieces.

So it was a revelation to me when I discovered that one of the themes of the CSRS is that of religious and spiritual understandings of a



Holly Radcliffe, "Moss green urn" from the "Présences" collection

good death in hospice palliative care, and that the Centre offers a fellowship for an artist in residence.

The concept of *pentimento* came to my attention as I read the first chapter of *Religious Understandings of a Good Death in Hospice Palliative Care*, a book produced by the CSRS. There it was, the focus for my research and creation in this residency.

The word *pentimento* is taken from the Italian, *pentirsi*, to repent. It is used in oil painting to refer to the reappearance of original elements that the artist tried to obliterate by overpainting. Drawing on Denzin's appropriation of this idea in autoethnography, Wright and Clark give the example of people from communist countries living in hospice care and facing their own imminent death. Some found themselves returning to the religious beliefs and symbols of their youth, which they had abandoned during their lifetime under communism. A similar pattern exists among First Nations peoples here in Canada and elsewhere, living with the effects of colonialism. This prompts

the question whether something of this nature may happen in others' experience of spiritual pain and resiliency at the end of life, particularly in the wake of collective trauma. This series of unique pieces will also speak to my own identity and social location in ways yet to be revealed.

My ceramics render accessible something of the silent mystery of death by their simplicity of form and engagement with the material through superimposition of abstract gesture and texture. My work draws the observer out of the usual reactions of discomfort and aversion to the reality of mortality, into a state of attentive contemplation.

For information about our Artist in Residence program, please see p.16 or visit our website (uvic.ca/csrs) and click on "Fellowships and awards".



Holly working on "Womb-tomb ossuary" at the Museum of Anthropology

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Jasjit Singh

An Interview with Jasjit Singh

Rachel Brown

CSRS Program and Research Coordinator

After Jasjit's visit to the CSRS in May, I was able to continue our conversation at a distance. We imagined new ways we could collaborate in the future, connected over our shared love of Star Wars, and dreamed up ways to share resources for teaching and research. Here is an excerpt from our conversation in which we discuss his time at the CSRS and what's next for him.

Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your work?

I'm a scholar of religion who focuses on processes of religious transmission among Sikhs in diaspora. This has led me to my current research interest which is examining the impact of the digital arena on the religious lives of Sikhs.

We had you visit the CSRS in May in collaboration with the local Sikh community. What were some of the highlights of that visit for you?

Can I say the whole week? From going to the BC Legislature on Monday, meeting MPPs and being introduced in Parliament, to visiting Paldi and its amazing heritage Gurdwara with Paul and Rachel and learning about its history with the grandson of the founder, Robin Mayo, to appearing on BC Sikh and Punjabi media, to presenting a lecture on my research both in person and online to

colleagues at the CSRS and then delivering a community workshop at the Multifaith Centre. It was all amazing.

A key part of your visit to Victoria was combining academic events with community-based events. Why do you think this kind of community engagement is so important for research institutions?

I've done this type of work since I started my academic career. I've gained so much personally and professionally from feeding back my research findings to the community groups outside academia that I've engaged. I've been able to highlight what academic research can offer while also building

Can you let our community know what's next for you?

I'm currently researching and writing a monograph provisionally titled 'Being Sikh in a Digital World'. And in September 2022, I'll be starting a project working with local faith communities in Leeds, looking at how we can improve university research culture to make universities more accessible.

That is such interesting and important work. We can't wait to partner with you and perhaps get you back to the CSRS for a fellowship when we work on our collaborative research project on religious pilgrimage to Batuu!



Jasjit serving Paul Bramadat at the Paldi Gurdwara

relationships and learning about the issues concerning these communities. As one of few Sikh academics actually researching Sikhs, I'm often called on by policy makers and media organisations to discuss Sikh issues. I feel I'm more able to do this authentically if I've engaged with and have the ear of the community.

What would you say to other academics/other local religious communities about this kind of collaboration?

I'd encourage them to go for it. I've found that people I've engaged with are genuinely interested in research—what it means to them, and how they might get involved. I've learned so much from my collaborations so far which has only improved my research. It's always best to try things out, and then reflect on what did/didn't work.



Rachel and Jasjit proving the value of social media for research collaboration

2022-23 FELLOWS

IAN H. STEWART GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



Aqsa Ijaz

(McGill University)

Shaping the Language of Love: The Afterlife of Nizāmī Ganjavi's Khusrau ū Shīrīn in Hindustān



Lucie Kotesovska

(University of Victoria)

Exploring Moments of Vision in the Modernist Novel and Reassessing Their Aesthetic and Spiritual Importance



Jason Ellsworth

(Dalhousie University)

Dharma Ventures: Global Buddhism, Social Enterprises and Value(s)

CSRS GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOW



Tanya Brittain

(University of Victoria)

Magic & Modernity: Shinto-Buddhist Talismans in Early Modern and Modern Japan



Ratana Ly

(University of Victoria)

A Legal Pluralist Approach to Realizing the Occupational Health and Safety of Construction Workers

HEATHER J. LINDSTEDT & BRIAN A. POLLOCK GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOW



Jessica Ziakin-Cook

(University of Victoria)

The Fool Eaten By God: Simone Weil, Cecil Collins, and the Art of Christian Contemplation

WINNIFRED LONSDALE GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOW



Catherine Reardon

(University of Victoria)

'The true doctrine of Physicke' and the Lull in English Witchcraft Convictions, 1630-1640

VISITING RESEARCH FELLOWS



Reena Cheruvalath

(Birla Institute of Technology and Science--Pilani)

Religion and Morality in School Curricula in Canada and India



Hadje Sadje

(Hamburg University)

The Value of Indigenous Spirituality in Constructing South Asian Theologies



Chunhua Zhan

(Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics)

Hermann Hesse and South Asian Religion

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE



Hinda Avery

Stories of Jewish Women in Graphic Novels: Bayla's Got (More) Issues



Holly Ratcliffe

Pentimenti : An Exploration, through the Creation of Ceramic Funeral Vessels, of Personal Stories of "Returning Home" to Abandoned Roots of Belief and Spiritual Practice



Terry Marner

Searching for Home-Finding Fingerposts in Neuroscience

KATHERINE YOUNG TRAVEL AWARD



Michael Gollner

(McGill University)

Scripturalization in Late Colonial South India: The Case of the Kāmikāgama (1916-19)

COMMUNITY SABBATICANT FELLOWS



Folawiyo (Kareem) Olajoku

The Role of Religious Institutions in the Selection Process of Political Leadership



Matthew Ponak

Oasis Time: A Home Based Guide to Spiritual Refreshment



Gyalsang Rinpoche

Buddhist Meditation in a Time of Pandemic



Gulcimen Yurtsever

An Investigation of the Relationships between Religious Ethics, Moral Imagination, and Sustainable Behavior

FACULTY FELLOWS



Cindy Holmes

(School of Social Work)

Around the Table: Exploring the Relationship between Food, Belonging, Spirituality and Social Justice through Dinner Dialogues



Zhongping Chen

(Department of History)

Religion, Racism, and Reform-Revolution Rivalry in North American Chinatowns, 1896-1916

2022-23 FELLOWS

ASSOCIATE FELLOWS



Angela Andersen

Islamic Architectures: Muslim Spaces of Prayer, Ceremony and Learning Beyond the Mosque



Rachel Brown

Acceptable Eats, Acceptable Citizens: Food and National Identity



Jim Cohn

Deals with the Devil: The Faust Theme in Marlowe, Goethe, and Mann



Harold Coward

Word, Chant and Song in the Major Religions: Spiritual Transformation



Michel Desjardins

Food: Connector to People's Spiritual Worlds



Erica Dodd

Treasures of the Early Christian Church



Robert Florida

Ethical Issues in Modern Buddhism



Nicola Hayward

The Use of Funerary Art for Commemorating Social Identity: The Case of the Via Latina's Samaritan Woman



Victor Hori

The Modernization of Buddhism in Global Perspective



Ambreen Hussaini

Art of Qur'anic Calligraphy and Material Culture: Investigating the Use of the Qur'anic Text in Contemporary Pakistan



Lesley Jessop

Students or Tailors? A Re-evaluation of the Sculptures on the South Transept of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris



Todd Klaiman

Developing a Pedagogic Curriculum to Evaluate the Effects of State Endorsed Cultural Tourism on Religious Sites in China



Francis Landy

Utopia, Catastrophe, and Poetry in Isaiah



Estraven Lupino-Smith

Landscape Liturgy: Weaving as Land-Based Ritual



Lytton McDonnell

Tuneful Trances: Music, Mysticism and Re-enchantment in Modern America



Graham McDonough

How Supersessionist Commitments Impede Catholic Christianity's Approach to Reconciliation with Indigenous Persons and Groups



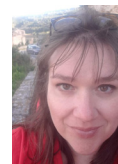
Brendon Neilson

Futuring Secular Christianity



Brian Pollick

The Merchant's Moral Eye: The Visualization of Moral Identity in Late Trecento Art



Justine Semmens

Dangerous Liaisons: Sex Crimes and the Courts in Catholic Reformation France, 1500-1700



Paige Thombs

Religion and Lawyers: Strange Bedfellows or Intimate Partners?



Reeta Tremblay

Missionaries, Colonial Imageries and Modern Kashmiri Muslim Identity



Carolyn Whitney-Brown

Henri Nouwen's Unfinished Last Manuscript: The Flying Trapeze



Grace Wong Sneddon

Chinese Canadian Spirituality in the 21st Century



Katherine Young

The Divyaprabandham, Canonization and Śrīvaisnava Formation: Musical Tropes and Identity Negotiations

EVENTS

Thursday Public Lecture Series

The CSRS lecture series features our fellows and special guests. They are held from 5:00-6:00pm Pacific Time on Thursdays in DTB A110 during the academic year, with the exception of certain special lectures (see dates below with an **asterisk*** for exceptions). All lectures include a Q&A period.

For further lecture details and updates, visit our website at: uvic.ca/csrs/events/.

September 15, 2022	Daromir Rudnyckij	Protestant Ghosts of Neoliberalism
*September 22, 2022 (11:00am-12:00pm, online only)	John McGuckin	Orthodoxy in Kiev and Moscow: History of an Ecclesial Union or Subjugation?
*September 29, 2022 (online only)	Sadaf Ahmed, Amélie Barras, Katherine Bullock, Aaron Hughes, and Sahver Kuzucuoglu	Producing Islam(s)
October 6, 2022	Carolyn Whitney-Brown	"The experience of an enfleshed spirituality": Henri Nouwen and the Flying Trapeze
October 13, 2022	Catherine Reardon	Physicians vs. Fundamentalists: The Lull in English Witchcraft Convictions
*October 20, 2022 (online only)	Philip Jenkins	Climate, Catastrophe, and Faith: How Changes in Climate Drive Religious Upheaval—Part I
*October 25, 2022 (online only)	Philip Jenkins	Climate, Catastrophe, and Faith: How Changes in Climate Drive Religious Upheaval—Part II
November 3, 2022	Aqsa Ijaz	Fiction and the Formation of Love: Reading Nizāmī Ganjavī in Islamicate India
November 17, 2022	Lucie Kotesovska	No Transcendence but in Things: Spirituality in Seamus Heaney's Poetry
November 24, 2022	Zhongping Chen	Religion, Racism, and Rivalry in North American Chinatowns, 1896-1916
December 1, 2022	Justine Semmens	Dangerous Liaisons: Sex Crimes and the Courts in France, 1500-1700
January 12, 2023	Jim Cohn	Selling Your Soul for Fun and Profit: Faustian Bargains
January 19, 2023	Zohra Batul and Reeta Tremblay	Sacred Sites as Public Sphere in Kashmir's Contentious Politics
January 26, 2023	Francis Landy	Three Bodies of God
February 2, 2023	Cindy Holmes	Around the Table: Dinner Dialogues, Spirituality and Social Justice
February 9, 2023	Brian Bird	Conscience and Democracy
February 16, 2023	Tanya Brittain	Tracing Talisman: Power Politics & Religion in Late Edo and Meiji Japan
March 2, 2023	Jessica Ziakin-Cook	Simone Weil and the Art of Christian Contemplation
March 9, 2023	Jason Ellsworth	Good Food, Good Migrants: Global Buddhists and Temporary Foreign Workers in Atlantic Canada
March 16, 2023	Ratana Ly	Cambodia: The Impact of Religious Norms on Workplace Safety in Construction
*March 23, 2023 (5:00-6:30pm)	Sa'diyya Shaikh	An Ethics of Love and Justice: Islamic Feminist Reflections
March 30, 2023	Rebecca Hall	Visions of Impermanence: Cremation Structures and the Path to Heaven in Northern Thailand
April 6, 2023	Holly Ratcliffe	<i>Pentimenti</i> : Ceramic Funeral Vessels as Biographies of Spiritual Homecomings

John Albert Hall Lecture Series

Brendon Neilson and Kathy Chan



The John Albert Hall Lectures are a joint initiative of the CSRS and the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets of British Columbia. They are made possible through the generous financial support of the John Albert Hall Trust.

The John Albert Hall event for the upcoming academic year will look different than it has in the past. Rather than host a series of public lectures, we are consolidating our energies to deliver a robust and sustained conversation on an important set of issues related to the use, regulation, and stewardship of religious property.

With the changed and changing religious context in Canada, faith communities and institutions face challenges that previous generations would not have considered. The church assets that are the legacy of Canada's colonial past carry with them responsibility and possibility. Lands and buildings that religious communities once considered essential to communal life look different in the light of a housing crisis, an ageing population, calls for justice for Indigenous peoples, and three years of Covid-19. For some communities, redevelopment or alternative uses of religious property are appealing options. Innovation and adaptation seem essential in order for religious institutions to continue to contribute to our society.

The workshop will explore the implications of the existential shifts in religious life for



the stewardship of religious property in 21st century Canada. What are the moral and religious obligations of a religious community that has a lot of assets, deeply-felt religious and social commitments, but few congregants? Why (if at all) is it important

for the church to honour the wishes of donors from generations past? Whose voices should guide decisions about the future management of church property? Where do tax considerations and registered charity status fit in? How are different religious communities responding to changing social realities in Canada in terms of their property use, and what can we learn from these experiences?



There are talented scholars, clergy, religious institutional staff, and policy-makers working on these questions, and we will gather a cohort to explore and examine the intersecting issues they raise.

We invite you to save the dates of May 4-6, 2023, for this exciting event. Look for more details including keynote speaker announcements to follow in the coming months.

For updates and links to our JAH video archive visit uvic.ca/csrs/events.



GOVERNANCE AND STAFF



Our People

Kathy Chan (Acting Director)
Rachel Brown (Program and Research Coordinator)
Scott Dolff (Program and Communications Associate)
Noriko Prezeau (Administrative Assistant)

Program Committee

Kathy Chan, Acting Chair (Law/CSRS)
Evanthia Baboula (Art History and Visual Studies)
Shamma Boyarin (Religion, Culture and Society)
Alexandra D'Arcy (Linguistics)
Maneesha Deckha (Law)
Réal Roy (Biology)
Amy Verdun (Political Science)

Ex officio:

Cynthia Milton (Associate VP Research)
Peter Scales (Chair, CSRS Advisory Council)
Oliver Schmidtke (Political Science/CFGS)

Advisory Council

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Peter Beyer (University of Ottawa)
Rory Dickson (University of Winnipeg)
Paul Gareau (University of Alberta)
Chris Goto-Jones (University of Victoria)
Lynn Greenhough (Rabbi at Kolot Mayim Reform Temple)
Gwen Jahelka (Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria)
Kate Newman (Anglican Diocese of BC)
Rubina Ramji (Cape Breton University)
Gurdeep Singh (Victoria Sikh Community)
Grace Wong Sneddon (University of Victoria)

Fellowships

The 2023-2024 fellowship deadline is **Monday, November 14, 2022**. For more information please visit: uvic.ca/csrs/fellowships. All fellowships include office space and membership in our dynamic, interdisciplinary research environment.

UVic Faculty Fellowships

For UVic faculty working on scholarly research projects related to some aspect of religion and society. Includes course-release.

Visiting Research Fellowships

The CSRS offers research space for scholars working on projects related to our mandate.

Graduate Student Fellowships

Includes research space and an award of \$6000.

Heather J. Lindstedt & Brian A. Pollick Graduate Student Fellowship

An award of \$6000 given to a graduate student in Art History and Visual Studies.

Artist-in-Residence Fellowship

The Chih-Chuang and Yien-Ying Wang Hsieh Award for Art and Spirituality is valued at approximately \$6000. The deadline is **Monday, April 3, 2023**.

Community Fellowships

For members of the broader public to join our research community on a short-term basis. Applications accepted on a rolling basis.

Indigenous Arts and Research Fellowships

Fellowships include support for faculty, graduate students, and artists working on projects related to religion/spirituality and reconciliation.

Harold Coward India Research Fellowship

Support for faculty, senior doctoral and post-doctoral students at Indian universities to pursue research at the CSRS.

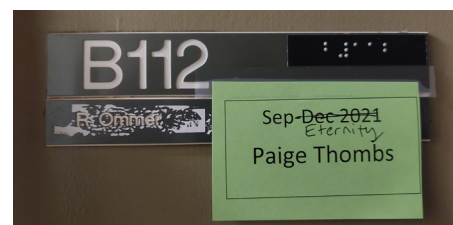
Katherine Young Travel Award

Travel funds for graduate students or faculty in Religious Studies at McGill University to pursue research at the CSRS.

Associate Fellowships

For local scholars who are actively engaged in research and interested in scholarly

community, but who may not need office space. Applications are considered on an **on-going basis**.



Giving to the CSRS

The CSRS has always been supported by the generosity of individuals and groups. The charitable giving of our donors helps young scholars achieve their life goals, provides a productive intellectual home for established scholars from UVic and all over the world, advances public dialogue towards greater critical understanding of the role of religion in society and assists in the creation of scholarly publications that inform public policy. Any and all contributions are appreciated. Those interested in making a donation can visit <https://extrweb.uvic.ca/centre-for-studies-in-religion-and-society>.

A charitable bequest directed to the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society is a tangible option for contributing to the success of the centre. Given through your will, a bequest can include gifts of cash, real estate, art work, or other property. Designating the centre as the beneficiary of your RRSP, RRIF, or insurance policy can also have significant tax advantages for your estate. To discuss how you could leave a legacy for future generations, please contact Nicole Pointon, Development Officer, at 250-721-7211 ext. 3893, or at humsdev@uvic.ca for a confidential conversation.

Contact Us

Mailing address:

Centre for Studies in Religion & Society
University of Victoria
PO Box 1700 STN CSC
Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada

Phone: 250-721-6325

Email: csrs@uvic.ca

Twitter: [@UVicReligioNews](https://twitter.com/UVicReligioNews)

Facebook: facebook.com/uvic.csrs

Web: www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs