

2023-24 Annual Report



University
of Victoria

Centre for Studies
in Religion & Society

DIRECTOR'S NOTES:

Paul Bramadat

I returned from a sabbatical in July 2023 and was delighted by how well-tended the Centre had been in my absence. I would like to thank Kathy Chan, the Acting Director, and our permanent staff, Rachel Brown, Scott Dolff, and Noriko Prezeau.

During my sabbatical I was able to finish a manuscript that has just passed through the peer review process at McGill-Queens University Press. John Borrows, David Seljak and I also continued work on a book on Indigenous spirituality/religion/culture in the public arena. We are nearly done this major undertaking. Finally, along with Pamela Klassen from the University of Toronto, Rachel and I co-edited a special issue of the *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* dedicated to "Health Humanities" (the interaction between conventional medical concerns and broadly humanistic artistic, cultural, and spiritual practices).

As always, we organized events of interest to scholars as well as the broader culture. One example that really stood out for me was the day-long symposium held in February to celebrate Remi De Roo, former bishop of Victoria and one of the founders of the CSRS.

The CSRS is unique, both at UVic and in the broader Canadian academic arena. The daily "coffee talks" in our library bring together local and visiting faculty members and graduate students, artists, activists, and insiders. Discussions are sometimes planned, and sometimes improvised. This year, a strong through-line for our discussions was our shared concerns about the climate crisis. These are urgent matters, and I am proud that the Centre is a place where people from such a wide range of backgrounds can worry, grieve, problem-solve, and (even sometimes) rejoice.

Our attention also turned toward the crises in Israel/Palestine, turmoil in India (esp. regarding the ongoing power of caste and patriarchal norms and laws), and ideas related to religious and spiritual activities (from yoga to food harvesting to tattooing to dance) that usually occur outside of conventional institutions. Whenever a political, cultural, methodological, ethical, or philosophical quandary arose, there was someone in the room to offer a trenchant perspective that spurred conversations in very productive ways.

This year saw a significant change to our Thursday lecture series. We have offered this series for over 30 years, but in September 2023, we opted to try a different approach. In the new Scholars in the Square format, speakers offer 20-minute lectures, followed by 20 minutes of high-level engagement with an interlocutor and the host, and then 20 minutes of open discussion in a high-tech room with about 20 guests (and unlimited guests on Zoom). These events are recorded and posted on-line. This shift has been successful both in the kinds of interactions it has allowed in the room, and the ways it has made our fellows' work accessible to people around the world.

I am really pleased with the way this year unfolded. I have learned a great deal from our fellows – about their research, their disciplinary or ethno-religious moorings, and their vast life experiences. I believe I have seen – yet again – that they have also found this to be a valuable place to write, read, learn, share, and challenge themselves, their peers, and the broader world.



The Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS) is an interdisciplinary research centre located at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia. We acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the CSRS stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Our mission is to foster the scholarly study of religion in relation to any and all aspects of society and culture, both contemporary and historical. The CSRS is regularly and deeply engaged in conversations with policy makers and civil society. We sponsor graduate student, faculty, artist in residence, visiting researcher, and community sabbaticant fellowships, and produce a dynamic annual program of public lectures and seminars. The CSRS is committed to pluralism and dialogue, attracting participants whose backgrounds and perspectives reflect a wide variety of religious, spiritual, and secular points of view.

2023-2024 Fellows

A list of the FELLOWS-IN-RESIDENCE who form the heart of our community:

VISITING RESEARCH FELLOWS



Jyoti Ahlawat
(Consultant, Chamba, India)
The Piety of Women Artisans of Chamba Rumal



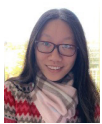
Tina Block
(Thompson Rivers University)
A Social History of Unbelief in Postwar English Canada



Seçil Dağtaş
(University of Waterloo)
Everyday Politics of Religious Difference in Southern Turkey



Abby Day
(Goldsmiths, University of London)
Beauty/Body Professionals as Secular Priests



JingJing Li
(Leiden University)
Feminist Theories in Buddhist Philosophies of Consciousness-Only



John Nelson
(University of San Francisco)
Encounters with Contemporary Asia and Its Religions



Matthew Orr
(Oregon State University)
Science-Based Directions in Ecospirituality



Shobhana Xavier
(Queen's University)
Sufi Shrines in Contemporary Post-War Sri Lanka



Adam Yaghi
(New York University Shanghai)
Collapse and Recovery Around the Dinner Table: Food as Paradise in Global Literary Contexts

UVIC FACULTY FELLOWS



Kristen Cheney
(UVic, School of Child and Youth Care)
Faith-Based Convictions and the Conundrum of Orphan Care

VISITING GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOW



Bouchra Mossmann
(University of Southern Denmark)
Making the Canadian Arctic a Muslim Home

WINNIFRED LONSDALE GRADUATE FELLOW



Andy Muchin
(UVic, History)
The Barry Sisters as Exemplars of Mid-Twentieth Century Jewish Acculturation

IAN H. STEWART GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



Megan Hollinger
(University of Ottawa, Classics and Religious Studies)
Combating Antisemitism in Contemporary Canada



Sean Kiley
(UVic, Music & Psychology)
Inducing Trance and Flow Through Music Found in Spiritual Contexts



Devyani Tewari
(UVic, Law)
Women with Invisible Disabilities in the Matrimonial Context in India

CSRS GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



Arvind Kumar
(UVic, Law)
Indigeneity and the Demonization of the Indigenous Peoples of India



Neil Montgomery
(UVic, Political Science)
The Sacred Foundations of Time Immemorial Right



Meghan Richey
(UVic, Interdisciplinary Studies & Education)
Generation Z and the Ecological Crisis

REV. HEATHER J. LINDSTEDT AND DR. BRIAN A. POLLICK GRADUATE FELLOW



Amina Ejaz
(UVic, Art History and Visual Studies)
Pakistani Artists and Artivists During the 1980s and 1990s

2023-24 Fellows-cont'd

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH FELLOW



Spencer Greening

Nii'n Txo'ont'm (The Ones Who Feed Us): Indigenous Reflections on Spirituality and Harvesting the Animals Who Feed Us



Reilly (Roberta) Yeo

Climate Ready: Preparing Physically, Mentally and Spiritually for Climate Change

COMMUNITY SABBATICANT FELLOWS



Patricia Lane

The Climate Crises and Faith Communities



Georgia Angelopoulos

Sacred Technologies



Terry Marner

Searching for Home - Finding Fingerposts in Neuroscience

ASSOCIATE FELLOWS

Angela Andersen

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

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 and Memory: 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

Françoise Keating

Innovative Aesthetics and "Unusual Christianity": The Re-Imagined Society of King René d'Anjou

Todd Klaiman

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

Francis Landy

The Book of Isaiah

Estraven Lupino-Smith

Landscape Liturgy: Weaving as Land Based Ritual

Robin Mazumder

A City That Can Save Us

Lytton McDonnell

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

Graham McDonough

How Supersessionism Impedes Catholic Christianity's Approach to Reconciliation with Indigenous Persons and Groups

Brendon Neilson

Post-Christian Diaspora: How Millennials are Making Meaning after Leaving the Church

Catherine Nutting

Rubens and the Stoic Baroque

Brian Pollick

The Merchant Moral Eye Model in Late Medieval European Art

Justine Semmens

Dangerous Liaisons: Sex Crime 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

Jessica Ziakin-Cook

The Romantics Are Prompting: Modern Art, Craft, and Catholicism in the St. John's Bible



Lectures and Events

From September 2023 to April 2024, we hosted **19 public lectures**. The lecture series was offered in hybrid format (in-person + online).

Sept. 14, 2023	Abby Day	Who Needs a Priest When You Have a Hairdresser?: Baring Bodies, Baring Souls
Sept. 21, 2023	Paul Bramadat	Yoga: Punch-line, Panacea, or Problem?
Sept. 28, 2023	Megan Hollinger	Creating Contact, Bridging Divides
Oct. 5, 2023	John Nelson	Adventures with Religions in Contemporary Asia
Oct. 12, 2023	Matt Orr	Science, Spirituality and a Sustainable Future
Oct. 26, 2023	Julian Evans	Deep Listening and the Animist Imaginary
Nov. 3, 2023	Dan Stone	The Holocaust: An Unfinished History
Nov. 9, 2023	Devyani Tewari	Flawed: Disability and Marriage Law in India
Nov. 23, 2023	Neil Montgomery	The Religious Threads of Canada's Colonial Constitution
Nov. 30, 2023	Andy Muchin	The Barry Sisters: America's Yiddish Swingsters
Jan. 11, 2024	Shobhana Xavier	Sufism, Rumi, and Religious Appropriation
Jan. 18, 2024	Seçil Dağtaş	An Uneasy Coexistence: Rethinking Minority Lives in Turkey
Feb. 1, 2024	Meghan Richey	Ecospirituality in Gen Z
Feb. 8, 2024	Linn Tonstad	Queerness Isn't Inclusive, and Church Shouldn't Be Either
Feb. 15, 2024	Amina Ejaz	Islam and Art-ivism in Pakistan
Feb. 24, 2024	Michael W. Higgins, et al	The Prophetic Vision of Bishop Remi De Roo: A Symposium
March 7, 2024	Arvind Kumar	The (Sacred) Stories We Tell: Stigma and Myth in India
March 14, 2024	Sean Kiley	Music and Trance: Mapping Altered States through Sound
March 21, 2024	Georgia Angelopoulos	Sacred Technologies



2024 SUMMER LECTURE SERIES

The 2024 Summer Lecture Series features a diverse set of topics across a number of disciplines. The issues are contemporary and historical, local and global, show the importance of religion as a lens through which we may engage areas of deep social concern, and illustrate the broad, interdisciplinary nature of the CSRS community.

May 2, 2024	Tina Block	"Virtuous Atheists": Unbelief in Postwar Canada
May 9, 2024	Bouchra Mossmann	Making the Arctic a Muslim Home
May 14, 2024	Elliot Hanowski	The Struggle for a Godless Canada
May 23, 2024	Braden Russell	Understanding Identity and Belonging of Queer Jews in Germany

Partnerships

2023-2024 JOHN ALBERT HALL PUBLIC LECTURES **Juli Mallett, JAH Steering Committee**

John Albert Hall Lecture Series sponsored several important events in 2023-2024.



Image credit: *There's Blood in the Rocks*, Video Installation Still, Marianne Nicolson.

In September 2023, Christ Church Cathedral hosted a screening of Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw artist **Marianne Nicolson's** film "Blood in the Rocks". Marianne and **Snxakila Clyde Michael Tallio** spoke to the historical impact of the smallpox epidemic of the 1860s, its aftermath, and the resurgence of Indigenous people in subsequent generations. The event was well attended and additional donations were collected for the Indigenous Residential Schools Survivors Society.

In February 2024, **Linn Tonstad** of Yale Divinity School took part in multiple community events on the UVic campus. Her provocative public lecture, "Queerness isn't inclusive, and church shouldn't be either!", reflected on the broader context in which queer theology is situated, examining the interplay of belonging, meaning, and what we hold in common. Linn also

participated in a workshop hosted by the UVic Inclusive Christians group on the theological import of dance and embodiment, and was a guest speaker in the UVic course "Religion and the News". These events attracted attendees from across the greater region and generated robust conversations.



Linn Tonstad. Image by Stacie Joy.

Unfortunately, a planned visit and series of lectures by biblical scholar **Francesca Stavrakopoulou** had to be postponed (and ultimately canceled) for personal reasons.

The 2024-2025 series, still in active development, will include an exciting symposium that will examine how religion might speak to recent developments and emerging challenges in the natural environment (e.g., climate change), built environment (e.g., housing), and internal human environment (e.g., the gut biome). We look forward to another successful year and the conversations to come.



Academic Collaborations and Initiatives

The 2023-2024 academic year was a busy one for our collaborations and co-hosted events. In the Fall, we worked with colleagues in Germanic and Slavic Studies and the School of Music to host a powerful event with Holocaust scholar Dan Stone. The event opened with a musical performance by UVic Associate Professor of Music Susan Snizek and guest artist Yoomi Kim. Dan then gave an excellent lecture on his recent book *The Holocaust: An Unfinished History*.

This Spring, we worked with members of the local, and national, Catholic community to host a day long symposium reflecting on the life and legacy of former Catholic Bishop Remi De Roo. The event included a keynote lecture by Michael W. Higgins of the University of St. Michael's College, two panel discussions, and a book launch of *Remi De Roo Pilgrim and Prophet: Wisdom for Today's Church in the World*. The event drew in over one hundred attendees from the University as well as the local community.

Our summer term includes two other co-hosted events on campus. We are working with our colleagues at Simon Fraser University to bring in author and scholar Monia Mazigh to speak about her new book *Gendered Islamophobia: My Journey with a Scarf*. Together with the Centre for Asia

Pacific Initiatives we also hosted a special coffeetalk with scholar Nadir Hosen (Monash University), who works on Islamic law in Indonesia.

Finally, we continue to be involved as collaborators on Lori Beaman's SSHRC-funded "Nonreligion in a Complex Future" project. We attended team meetings, virtual seminars, and welcomed a visiting graduate student, Meghan Hollinger, in the Fall of 2023. Meghan was a vibrant member of the CSRS community and gave a talk related to her research on combatting anti-Semitism in Canada titled "Creating Contact, Bridging Divides." We are currently working with the NCF team to plan a co-hosted workshop in the 2024-2025 academic year.

University of Victoria | Centre for Studies in Religion and Society

The Prophetic Vision of Bishop Remi De Roo: A Symposium

24 February
9:30am-3:30pm
UVic University Club

LUNCH PROVIDED

uvic.ca/csrs/events

Research and Publications

We welcomed Paul back this year after his productive sabbatical during which he travelled across North America (and into Asia) to study, practice, and speak about postural yoga. This fieldwork was part of his major SSHRC Insight Grant funded project. This year he finalized *The Body Settles the Score: Yoga and the End of Innocence*, which will be published with McGill-Queen's University Press. In the spring, he received very positive responses from his reviewers and is currently working on minor revisions before submitting the final draft for publication. We anticipate this book will be out in early 2025.

We also began planning for a workshop titled "We Should Know Better: A Workshop of Western Scholars of Religion Involved in Asian Spiritual Practices" that we will host at the CSRS in September 2024. This will bring scholar-practitioners to UVic to reflect critically on the experience of studying something one also practices; the experience is especially odd when some might say we now know enough about the "politics of practice" and the "politics of the academic gaze" that perhaps we should be reluctant to immerse ourselves in these communities.

Our volume on Indigenous Spiritualities is nearly complete. This edited collection, tentatively entitled *Opening and Closing Relations: Indigenous Spirituality in Canada*, includes contributions from scholars of Indigenous law, history, and literature, as well as sociologists, political scientists, and religious studies. Paul is editing this along with John Borrows (UVic Law) and David Seljak (University of Waterloo). We anticipate sending off the completed manuscript to the University of Toronto Press in May 2024.

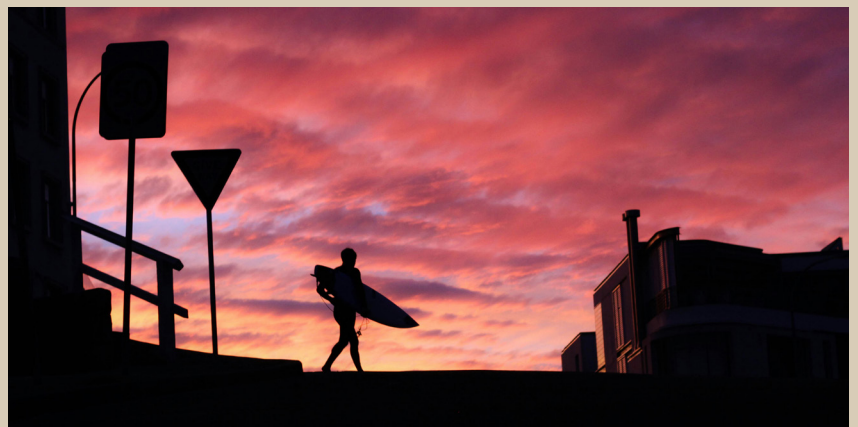


the Study of Religion and expect the special collection to be out in 2024.

Paul continues to engage with Australian colleagues on their large national research project (funded by the Australian Research Council) related to spirituality, well-being, and risk perception in Australia. The survey, interviews, and fieldwork components of this project begin in the summer of 2024. This project will produce two books and several articles, and ought to help Australians understand more critically the ways Indigenous, minority, and those from extra-religious communities and life-stances are engaging with Australian society. He also continues to work with colleagues in the International Research Network on Science, Religion, and Health (housed at the Autonomous University of Barcelona).



This year we finalized our special collection of articles on Health Humanities. Paul, Rachel and our colleague Pamela Klassen (University of Toronto) edited nine excellent contributions by colleagues from around the world. The articles all address the relationship between healthcare professionals and institutions and religious and spiritual practices that are not part of mainstream institutional religion (e.g., Reiki, and spiritual but not religious sub-cultures). We have submitted all of the articles to *Bulletin for*



Community of Learning



Coffee Talks

"Coffee talk" conversations at the Centre provide an opportunity for CSRS fellows and special guests to address issues of common concern. In-person discussions took place in the CSRS library on Mon/Tues/Wed/Fri, with a special hybrid option on Fridays. Coffee hour has long been the beating heart of the CSRS community; these caffeine-fueled conversations bring our fellows into contact with one another and a wide world of ideas and perspectives. In addition to dozens of discussions in which the theme is determined by the people in the room, the politics of the day, and key intellectual challenges our fellows might face, we also hosted over 40 specially-themed coffee discussions on topics such as:

- "Neuroscience and the Soul of the City" (Robin Mazumder)
- "Money—Modernity's Enchantment?" (John Thatamanil)
- "Faith-based Interventions in Global Orphan Care" (Kristen Cheney)
- "Faith groups as Agents of Climate Action" (Patricia Lane, Meg Richey, and Reilly Yeo)
- "Meat and Identity" (Rachel Brown, Spencer Greening, and Arvind Kumar)
- "The Master Musicians of Joujouka" (Patrick Boyle)
- "Intergenerational Conversations about LGBTQ+ Needs at the End of Life—Reflections from Sweden" (Max Kleijberg)
- "Contemporary Issues in Law and Religion in Indonesia" (Nadir Hosen)
- "How to Get Religion Research Published and Funded: 4 Big Ideas" (Abby Day)
- "The Building of Congregation Emanu-El: Architecture as a Sacred and Social Jewish Narrative in Early Victoria" (Brian Pollick)



CENTRE CINE

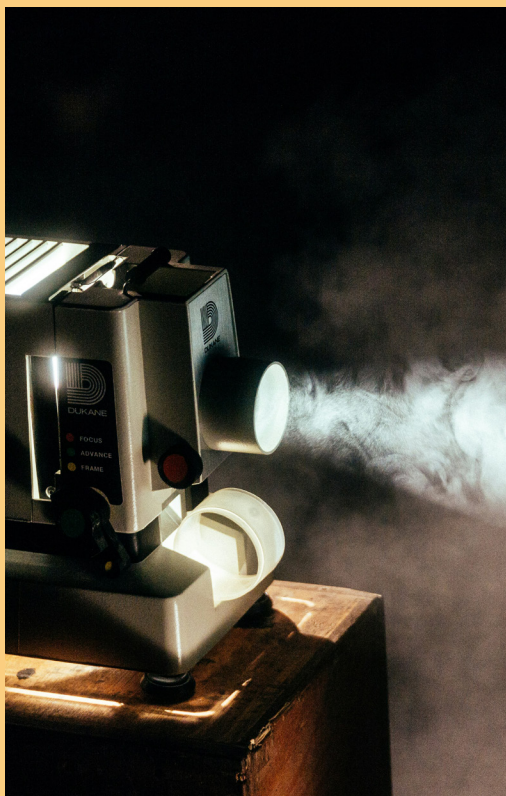
Season 8: September 2023 – May 2024

Season nine of the "Centre Cine" coffee talk series, facilitated by our Artist-in-Residence **Terry Marner**, explored questions of morality, culture, the search for meaning, and other themes arising from the human spiritual journey.

The selection of films this year included *London River* (2009), *First Reformed* (2017), *Sami Blood* (2016), *Apostasy* (2017), and *About Endlessness* (2019).

We support the Centre Cine series by hosting viewing parties in the CSRS library in the days prior to our discussion. Those who cannot attend are able to view the films on Kanopy, a streaming system available through the UVic library and Greater Victoria Public Library.

During the Centre Cine discussion hour, Terry offers background and facilitates an engaging conversation about the film. We look forward to Centre Cine's 9th season this fall.



Governance and Finances

OUR PEOPLE

Paul Bramadat (Director)

Rachel Brown (Program and Research Coordinator)

Scott Dolff (Program and Communications Associate)

Noriko Prezeau (Administrative Assistant)

Beatrice McIntosh (Work Study Student)

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Paul Bramadat, Chair (History, CSRS Acting Director)

Evanthia Baboula (Art History and Visual Studies)

Shamma Boyarin (Religion, Culture and Society)

Patrick Boyle (Music)

Alexandra D'Arcy (Linguistics/Assoc. Dean Humanities)

Maneesha Deckha (Law)

Amy Verdun (Political Science)

ex officio: Oliver Schmidtke (Centre for Global Studies)

ex officio: Cynthia Milton (Associate VP Research)

ex officio: Peter Scales (Chair, Advisory Council)

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Peter Scales, Chair (Unitarian Chaplain)

Peter Beyer (University of Ottawa)

William (Rory) Dickson (University of Winnipeg)

Paul Gareau (University of Alberta)

Chris Goto-Jones (University of Victoria)

Lynn Greenhough (Kolot Mayim Reform Temple)

Gwen Jahelka (Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria)

Rubina Ramji (Cape Breton University)

Gurdeep Singh (Victoria Sikh community)

Grace Wong Sneddon (University of Victoria)

Financial Summary

For the fiscal period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Operational Revenues	\$290,687
General Endowments	\$226,920
Fellowship & Awards Endowments	\$23,220
Library Endowments	\$14,590
Province of BC	\$8,245
Lectures & Events Endowments	\$4,620
Book Royalties	\$638
Miscellaneous Recoveries	\$12,454
Project Revenues	\$114,231
SSHRCYoga Project	\$ 88,068
John Albert Hall Lecture Series	\$26,163
Donations	\$63,740
Fellowships	\$41,000
CSRS Main Endowment	\$10,740
Other Donations	\$12,000
Total Revenues	\$468,658

Operational Expenses	\$273,912
Salaries and Benefits	\$217,976
Fellowships and Awards	\$36,500
Programs, Supplies, Infrastructure	\$19,435
Project Expenses	\$80,640
Yoga Research Project (Year 2)	\$27,189
Cascadia Research Project (wrap up)	\$3,804
John Albert Hall Lecture Series	\$29,047
Library Expenditures	\$3,229
Misc. Lectures, Conferences, Events	\$17,371
Total Expenditures	\$354,552

The principal amount in the CSRS Endowment accounts as of March 31, 2024 is \$6,982,484.

Centre for Studies in Religion and Society

University of Victoria

PO Box 1700, STN CSC,

Victoria, BC

Canada V8W 2Y2



**University
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Centre for Studies
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Phone: 250-721-6325

Email: csrs@uvic.ca

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

Facebook: facebook.com/uvic.csrs

Web: www.uvic.ca/csrs

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