

2024-25 Annual Report



University
of Victoria

Centre for Studies
in Religion & Society

DIRECTOR'S NOTES:

Paul Bramadat

It is usually the case that in these columns I note how busy the centre has been in the year under review. This time, I mean it like I've never meant it before. I should begin my final annual report column by expressing gratitude to my colleagues, Rachel, Scott, and Noriko. They have worked efficiently and effectively to deliver a very full program of events.

Scholars in the Square, our distinctive public lecture series, continues to be an extremely effective way of sharing the work of our researchers with a broader community. In a high-tech room (capacity of about 25), our fellows offer a publicly accessible lecture, followed by a discussion with a carefully chosen interlocutor, and then an open conversation period with others in the room and on Zoom. The events are made available on YouTube, which expands our reach considerably; and, as always, fellows benefit from a focused one-hour tease-out of their lecture the next day during our coffee talk session.

In September 2024 we hosted seventeen colleagues from around the world for our We Should Know Better workshop. This event brought together western-trained experts who understand well the ways Asian traditions get framed in sometimes questionable ways by scholars. The participants know these dynamics well, and yet they all find themselves personally drawn to these practices (e.g., yoga, reiki, meditation, Sufi practices, etc.). How do scholar-practitioners, especially those who are raised in the west, but drawn to Asian spiritualities, practice and research with integrity? I am editing a book of essays on ways each of us makes our ways through these questions.

This project grew out of my long interest in so-called insider-outsider dynamics, but especially fieldwork related to my book, *Yogalands: In Search of Practice on the Mat and in the World*. *Yogalands* was officially released on April 8th, 2025 (with various launch events held in the US and Canada since November), and so far the reception has been quite enthusiastic.

We have worked extensively with the Centre for Global Studies to produce Can We Talk?, three carefully-curated lunch-time events. In the wake of terribly divisive debates at UVic last year, we decided to gather our colleagues over a meal to think about more effective ways of dealing with complex global issues that fill our news feeds and discussions in the classroom, faculty club, and dinner tables.

In March, we hosted a productive two-day workshop involving Canadian colleagues (from religious studies, sociology, nursing, etc.) interested in the issues that arise when non-religious or post-religious people experience end of life care. This event was produced in collaboration with Lori Beaman's Nonreligion in a Complex Future Project at the University of Ottawa.

And finally, in April the CSRS and the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets held a day-long event on the relationship between religion/spirituality on the one hand and the environment on the other hand. We spent half of our time thinking and talking about the natural environment with esteemed theologians, and the other half talking with urban planners, architects, scholars and others about what a curious and critical approach to our built environment can contribute to our understanding of the nature and perhaps future of religion and spirituality.

What made this year's activities most rewarding is the fact that our cohort of fellows has been unusually engaged. As much as I value the high-impact visits from international colleagues, our major book projects and workshops, it is the daily interactions with the fellows that I will miss the most, and what made this year so deeply satisfying.



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.

2024-2025 Fellows

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

VISITING RESEARCH FELLOWS



Mohammad Badamchi

(Institute for Cultural, Social and Civilizational Studies, Tehran)
Hijab as Patriarchal Technology



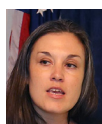
Dietrich Jung

(University of Southern Denmark)
The Arctic Muslim, Islamic Traditions and Modern Subjectivity in the Western North



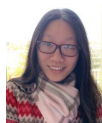
Javed Kalhoro

(National Univ. of Modern Languages, Pakistan)
A Case Study of the Private Army of Hur Mujahideen



Rebekka King

(Middle Tennessee State University)
Enoch: Contemporary Reception of an Ancient Text



JingJing Li

(Leiden University)
Emotion and Feminism in the Buddhist Philosophy of Consciousness-Only



Mohammad Ashraful Mobin

(Ifintell Business Intelligence)
Exploring Religious Perspectives on Alternative Monetary Systems



Daniel Orogun

(University of Pretoria)
Religion, Spirituality and Healthcare: African and North American Perspectives



Braden Russell

(University of British Columbia)
Kinship and Enoughness in Queer Jewish Cultural Production in Germany

UVIC FACULTY FELLOWS



Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly

(School of Public Administration)
Borders, Boundaries, Frontiers and Borderlands in the Torah and Talmud



Zaheera Jinna

(School of Social Work)
Believing and Belonging in BC: Sketching the Demographics and Experiences of BC Muslims



Gary Kuchar

(Department of English)
Defiant Obedience: The Literature of Anglican Survivalism (1642-1660)

VISITING GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOW



Olha Chaplia

(Ivan Franko National University of Lviv)
Sermon on Law and Grace

WINNIFRED LONSDALE GRADUATE FELLOW



Laura Gillis

(UVic, History)
The Emissaries of Divine Light in the 20th Century

IAN H. STEWART GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



Shubham Arora

(University of British Columbia, Asian Studies)
An Intellectual History of Pleasure (kāma) in Sanskrit Literature, 300-1300 CE



Hinna Hussein

(University of Ottawa, Religious Studies)
Social Integration as an Aspect of Muslim Participation in Environmental Issues



Paige Thombs

(UVic, Law)
Religious Lawyers in the Secular Practice of Canadian Law

CSRS GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



Leah Mernaugh Bergman

(UVic, Anthropology)
Yoga and Christianity: A Stretch, or a Perfect Match?



Aminat Muibi

(UVic, School of Business)
The Role of Rituals in Meaning Creation with Audiences in Gambling Organizations

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



Holly Loveday

(UVic, Fine Arts)
Where Faith, Kinship Structures, and Social Mobility Meet

SCALES FAMILY FELLOW



Kikila (Chris) Perrin

(UVic, Political Science and Geography)
Learning to Listen: Cultivating Settler Support for Resurgence

2024-25 Fellows-cont'd

COMMUNITY SABBATICANT FELLOWS



Tori Jones

Enlightened Artifacts for an Uncertain Future



Patricia Lane

The Climate Crises and Faith Communities



Ashley Moran

The Spiritual Health Provider's Role to Support Nurses in Ethical Clinical Decision Making in Palliative Care



Folawiyo Kareem Olajoku

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

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE



Jacob Maddison

Sacred Ink: Weaving Diasporic Stories Through Print



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

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

Tim Knowlton

The Languages of Ritual Healing in Indigenous Mesoamerica

Francis Landy

Metaphor and Imagination in the Hebrew Bible

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

Catherine Nutting

Rubens and the Stoic Baroque

Daniel Orogun

Religion, Health Care, and Health Systems

Brian Pollick

Art and Moral Identity in the Global Middle Ages

Justine Semmens

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

Devyani Tewari

The 'Other' in the Matrimonial Context: Women with Invisible Disabilities in India

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 2024 to April 2025, we hosted **23 public lectures across a diverse set of subjects**. The Scholars in the Square lecture series is offered in hybrid format (in-person + online), and features a scholarly lecture followed by engaging conversation.

Sept. 12, 2024	Rebekka King	Enoch's Modern Echoes
Sept. 19, 2024	Paige Thombs	Called to the Bar: Religious Lawyering in the Secular Practice of Law
Sept. 26, 2024	Mar Grier	Why We Might Know Better: The Scholar Practitioner in Context
Oct. 3, 2024	Martin Adam	AI Buddhas and Other Delusions along the Techno-enthusiast Path to the Future
Oct. 10, 2024	Amy Verdun and Zoey Verdun	Well-being of Bangladeshi Migrants in Italy: Religion, Economic Challenges
Oct. 17, 2024	Jingjing Li	Emotion and Feminism in the Buddhist Philosophy of Consciousness-only
Oct. 24, 2024	Titus Hjelm	Religion and Spirituality Are Not Something We Have (Or Do Not Have), They Are Something We Do
Oct. 29, 2024	Peter Beinart	Protest, US Politics, and the War in Gaza
Nov. 7, 2024	Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly	Borders, Boundaries, and Frontiers in the Torah and Talmud
Nov. 21, 2024	Daniel Orogun	Health Merits and Demerits of Religious Fasting
Nov. 28, 2024	Gary Kuchar	Defiant Loyalty: The Literature of 'Anglican' Survivalism
Dec. 5, 2024	Ashraf Mobin	The Currency Debate in Islam: From Gold Dinars to Bitcoin
Jan. 9, 2025	Leah Mernaugh Bergman	Yoga and Christianity: A Stretch, or a Perfect Match?
Jan. 16, 2025	Shubham Arora	An Intellectual History of Pleasure in Sanskrit Literature
Jan. 30, 2025	Spencer Greening	<i>Nii 'Ntxo'ont'm</i> (The Ones Who Feed Us): Indigenous Teachings on Spirituality, Ecosystems, and Harvesting
Feb. 6, 2025	Holly Loveday	Family Breaking or Building: The Catholic Church in Ireland
Feb. 13, 2025	Kikila Perrin	Cultivating Settler Support for Resurgence
Feb. 27, 2025	Yucef Soufi	Homegrown Radicals
March 6, 2025	Hinna Hussain	Environmental Stewardship and Muslim Engagement in Canada
March 13, 2025	Lori Beaman and Doug Ezzy	How Nonreligion Changes End of Life Care
March 20, 2025	Heba Mostafa	Architecture of Anxiety: Body Politics and the Formation of Islamic Architecture
March 27, 2025	Jacob Maddison	Inking Diasporic Stories
April 26, 2025	John Albert Hall Workshop	Where We Live: Critical Perspectives on Our Natural and Built Environments

2025 SUMMER LECTURE SERIES

The 2025 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.

April 30, 2025	Zaheera Jinnah	Belief and Belonging among Muslims in British Columbia
May 7, 2025	Dietrich Jung	Arctic Muslims. Studying Religion in Deep Snow
May 14, 2025	Laura Gillis	YouTube History: The Emissaries of Divine Light
May 21, 2025	Bob Gibbs	Disagree for God's Sake: The Idea of Discord in the University
May 28, 2025	Françoise Keating	Artful Dealings: The Noble Vision of René d'Anjou

Partnerships

John Albert Hall Lecture: Where We Live: Critical Perspectives on Our Natural and Built Environments

Each year the CSRS collaborates with colleagues at the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets to offer programming of interest to both scholars and members of the local community. This year our day-long workshop involved scholars and professionals in a moderated public conversation about crises that beset the natural and built environments.



Catherine Keller

Highlighting our panel on the natural environment was **Catherine Keller**, George T. Cobb Professor of Constructive Theology at Drew University. Catherine is a scholar and public intellectual renowned for her ability to think critically about religion, culture, and the relationship between the two. Her keynote lecture, "Matter of Life: Building Solidarity in a Climate of Apocalypse" asked deep questions of the Christian tradition and our imperiled contemporary world. It was followed by a rich conversation with **Mari Joerstad**, Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Vancouver School of Theology.

In our second session, we turned our attention to challenges facing cities: how do we reimagine the environments we build in a manner that makes our communities more affordable, beautiful, sustainable, and conducive to good mental and spiritual health? The event was moderated by CBC radio host **Gregor Craigie**, author of the recent (and award-winning) *Our*

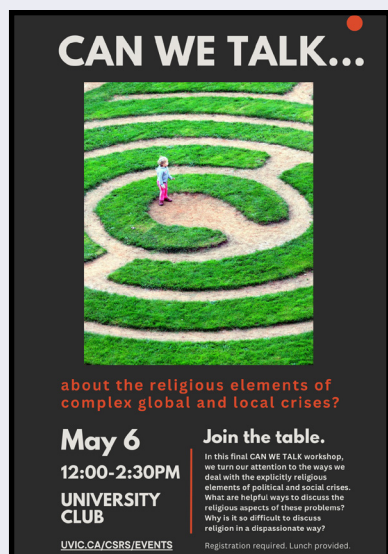
Crumbling Foundation: How We Solve Canada's Housing Crisis. Guests included **Franc D'Ambrosio**, principal at Dau Studio and senior architect for some of Victoria's most iconic and appreciated architecture; **Kaeley Wiseman**, principal at Wiser Projects and founder of Wiser Development Non-Profit Society, a leading light in the not-for-profit housing sector; **Robin Mazumder**, an environmental neuroscientist and Postdoctoral Fellow at the Future Cities Institute at the University of Waterloo; and **Brendon Neilson**, Executive Director of the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets, and lead on the Christ Church Cathedral Precinct 'Building for the Future' initiative.



The Atrium, Victoria, BC.

This one-day event allowed audience members not just to witness leading scholars and activists discussing issues of great importance to the planet as well our cities, but also to engage our guests and one another, to share a meal, and to become more effective members of civil society.

Academic Collaborations and Initiatives



This was a tremendously productive year at the CSRS. We wanted to celebrate some of the main themes and networks on which Paul has worked in his 17 years as Director.

Our long-term collaboration with Lori Beaman's Nonreligion in a Complex Future project culminated in a lively two-day workshop on "End of Life Care and Nonreligion". We hosted 12 in-person participants from across Canada, as well as a handful of online participants from Australia and South America, in a workshop on the relationship between nonreligion and end of life care. We followed an innovative format for this series of discussions and are looking forward to seeing what kind of knowledge production will come from this inspiring couple of days. We also received another bright graduate student from Lori's team, Hinna Hussain, who is researching Muslim environmental action in secular contexts.

We were also busy with on-campus collaborations this year. Together with the Centre for Global Studies, we hosted the well-received Can We Talk? series. This series of three workshops brought faculty, students and other members of the UVic community into lunchtime conversations about hard topics. The discussions in many ways brought the best of what the CSRS offers—collegial critical conversation among people from vastly different backgrounds and perspectives—to the rest of the campus. We also worked with colleagues to bring several prominent scholars to UVic, including well-known journalist Peter Beinart, renowned sociologist of religion Titus Hjelm, and our Distinguished Lecturer in Islam, Heba Mostafa.

In Spring 2025, we continued our long-standing partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets. The John Albert Hall Workshop "Where We Live: Critical Perspectives on Our Natural and Built Environments (see above) delivered a rich and varied conversation that brought together voices from the university and the broader community. Our summer lecture series brought other well-known scholars to UVic, including Dietrich Jung (U. of Southern Denmark), and Bob Gibbs (U. of Toronto). All of these collaborations and initiatives reveal the healthy network, both on campus and internationally, that is at the core of what we do at the CSRS.

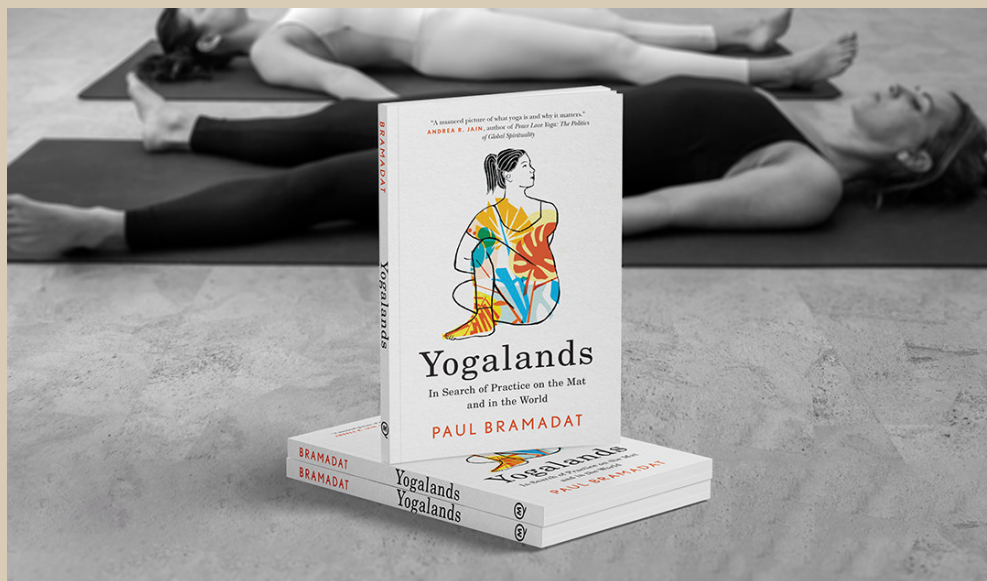
Research and Publications

This year we saw some of our central research projects enter their final stages while also launching new and exciting projects that will continue to keep the tradition of collaborative, international, and interdisciplinary research at the heart of the Centre.

First, we are thrilled to see Paul's book *Yogalands: In Search of Practice on the Mat and in the World* (McGill Queens 2025) out in the world and on people's bookshelves. This year we have worked to support Paul in the final steps of the publication process and have worked with MQUP on promotional plans that are now unfolding. This book is already receiving positive attention and we are looking forward to supporting the many book launch events and scholarly engagements with the text that will inevitably follow.

Coming out of Paul's SSHRC funded research on yoga, we launched a centre based research project on the ways Western trained scholar-practitioners of spiritualities "from away" navigate

the slippery slopes of being critical outsiders while also personally invested insiders. We hosted a three day workshop called *We Should Know Better* in the Fall of 2024, in which we welcomed 17 scholar-practitioners from around the world (Australia, Spain, Switzerland, the US, and Canada). The workshop participants critically engaged



each other's work while experiencing and learning about one another's respective practices. We have now received everyone's edited contributions and will be pulling them all together into a manuscript that Paul will edit and MQUP will publish.

Finally, as a fitting close to Paul's time as Director of the centre, we submitted the third and final volume in the Religion and Ethnicity project to the University of Toronto Press in 2024. This volume is entitled *Opening and Closing*

Relations: Indigenous Spiritualities in Canada and has just passed the peer review phase with three excellent reviews from readers; we should be able to submit the revised book to the press by the end of the summer. Paul's work on volume one of the Religion and Ethnicity project began under founding Director Harold Coward, so it is a beautiful full circle moment to have volume three coming to a close in Paul's final year.





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:

- "Decolonial Challenges in India" (Arvind Kumar)
- "Celebration of Alan Batten's Life" (Erica Dodd)
- "Modern Medical Ethics and Hinduism" (Katherine Young)
- "What's in an Introduction? Politics and Protocols" (Kikila Perrin)
- "Towards a Critique of the 'Kidnapped from Israel' Posters" (Jacob Maddison)
- "Recording the Divine: Surveillance in Sacred Spaces" (Christopher Gillespie)
- "Diwali" (Shubham Arora)
- "Help! I've Walked into a Poem." (Holly Loveday)
- "Milton's *Macbeth*: Tyranny and Transcendence in and Beyond *Paradise Lost*" (Gary Kuchar)
- "Art Workshop: Drawing out the Land" (Tori Jones)
- "Hungary: Law Schools, Christianity, and the Constitution" (Paige Thombs)
- "(Re)imagining India" (Devyani Tewari and Jeremy Webber)



CENTRE CINE

Season 9: September 2024 – May 2025

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 *Neptune Frost* (2021), *Costa Brava*, *Lebanon* (2021), *Lourdes* (2009), *The Great Buddha+* (2017), *Whale Rider* (2002), and *The Monk and the Gun* (2023).

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 10th 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)

Dilraj Singh Gulati (Work Study Student)

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Paul Bramadat, Chair (History, CSRS Acting Director)

Evanthia Baboula (Art History and Visual Studies)

Adrienne Williams Boyarin (English)

Shamma Boyarin (Religion, Culture and Society)

Patrick Boyle (Music)

Maneesha Deckha (Law)

Amy Verdun (Political Science)

ex officio: Fraser Hof (Social Science - VP Research)

ex officio: Peter Scales (Chair, Advisory Council)

ex officio: Oliver Schmidtke (Centre for Global Studies)

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Peter Scales, Chair (Unitarian Chaplain)

Peter Beyer (University of Ottawa)

William (Rory) Dickson (University of Winnipeg)

Pearl Gervais (Remi De Roo Associate)

Chris Goto-Jones (University of Victoria)

Lynn Greenhough (Kolot Mayim Reform Temple)

Alison Marshall (Brandon University)

Kate Newman (Christ Church Cathedral School)

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, 2024 to March 31, 2025

Operational Revenues	\$296,583
General Endowments	\$239,150
Fellowship & Awards Endowments	\$27,840
Library Endowments	\$15,190
Province of BC	\$8,245
Lectures & Events Endowments	\$4,910
Book Royalties	\$1,248
Miscellaneous Recoveries	\$0
Project Revenues	\$48,765
SSHRC Yoga Project	\$20,265
SSHRC Cascadia	\$3,500
John Albert Hall Lecture Series	\$25,000
Donations	\$20,835
Fellowships	\$12,500
CSRS Main Endowment	\$7,695
Other Donations	\$640
Total Revenues	\$366,183

Operational Expenses	\$315,827
Salaries and Benefits	\$204,886
Fellowships and Awards	\$67,952
Programs, Supplies, Infrastructure	\$42,989
Project Expenses	\$41,331
Yoga Research Project (Year 3)	\$8,872
Cascadia Research Project (wrap up)	\$3,500
John Albert Hall Lecture Series	\$2,442
Library Expenditures	\$10,590
Misc. Lectures, Conferences, Events	\$15,927
Total Expenditures	\$357,158

The principal amount in the CSRS Endowment accounts as of March 31, 2025 is \$7,158,596.

Centre for Studies in Religion and Society

University of Victoria

PO Box 1700, STN CSC,

Victoria, BC

Canada V8W 2Y2



**University
of Victoria**

Centre for Studies
in Religion & Society

Phone: 250-721-6325

Email: csrs@uvic.ca

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

Facebook: facebook.com/uvic.csrs

Web: www.uvic.ca/csrs

Design by Heidelberg
Content by Committee