

Western Region

California
Pacific Islands
Nevada

Hawaii
Guam
Arizona



**Performing
Religions, Faith
& Spirituality**

President's Welcome

2025 AARWR Conference @ ASU

Welcome to AAR Western Regional Conference 2025 at Arizona State University,
The Educational Diamond in the Desert!

Arizona State University is indeed a diamond in Higher Education. It has a way of reshaping fragments of ideas into diamonds. This year as we gather in Tempe AZ, we celebrate and engage in academic religious inquiry to examine the ways religious studies intersects with every aspect of our lives.

The American Academy of Religion (AAR) pursues the study of world religions broadly. The Western Region has chosen for our 2025 theme to lean into the lived experience of the study of religious life. We recognize that religion only comes alive as we live it out. It is a praxeological challenge. Not merely asking, how does religion come alive?, but more importantly how does it make us as humans come alive. We align with Howard Thurman who most profoundly wrote, "don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

So together, we take up the challenge of a conference centered on the diversity of religious expression across time and space and how those religions come alive. Religious expression shapes who we are and what it means to be practitioners within human experience. Faith as praxis and religion as a discipline intersect when innovation molds them into contemporary media, performance, and scholarship. We seek to bring alive these innovations. Innovation is an endemic aspect of the ASU culture. It is a part of the very air of all of its many campuses.

This year's conference goal is also to "expand our acknowledgement of diverse religious expression and take inspiration from our roots as we tackle the religious dimensions of new frontiers in science and technology." We want to examine the complex intersections of religion with technology and science. It is our belief that science and technology have always grown out of the human imagination and the caverns of the possible.

Many years ago, I would call the search for something new spelunking. I took the term, of course, from the notion of cave diving into the depths of unknown places and spaces to retrieve undiscovered gems never seen or experienced before. I invite you all to the intellectual task this year of spelunking to boldly go where you have never gone before with young scholars and senior scholars, alike, as they take us to new frontiers in the study of religion.

We hope to explore strange new practices, to seek out new modalities of inquiry and expressions, to reveal new lived possibilities in a world struggling to engage as civilized nations. Ultimately, we are shaping a new generation of scholarship that goes beyond the classroom or the halls of academe, but that ventures out with expressions of faith that have come alive as a contagion that brings life to desolate hearts and minds.

So come away with us this weekend and spelunk, and just perhaps you will discover something precious and new. Welcome to AAR Western Region 2025 at Arizona State University!

Rev. Dr. Sakena Young-Scaggs,
Sun Devil BA'96, BA'96, and PhD 2019
Senior Associate Dean for Religious and Spiritual Life &
Pastor of Stanford Memorial Church

Conference Theme

Performing Religions, Faith & Spirituality

Religious Studies intersects with every aspect of our lives: political, spiritual, pastoral, creative, performative, and relational. The study of religious life, thought, and practice touches upon our identities, responsibilities, and cultures. It can help us to explore our own selves as we acknowledge the diversity of religious expression across time and space.

The American Academy of Religion-Western Region has always embraced the diversity of such expressivity -- whether through academics, artistry, leadership, or other praxis domains. This year at Arizona State University March 14-16, 2025, we would like to continue in that tradition.

Innovation is an endemic aspect of the ASU culture. This year, AAR-WR takes inspiration from its location for its 2025 theme, acknowledging both the exciting prospects and serious concerns that the future holds, and broadcasting a vision of hope about new opportunities for appreciating one another as individuals and communities.

Attendees at the 2024 University of Nevada, Las Vegas, conference made clear their preference: Expand our acknowledgement of diverse religious expression and take inspiration from our roots as we tackle the religious dimensions of new frontiers in science and technology. We encourage you to share with us your work relating to the varieties of eclectic, particular, indigenous, diasporic, ancient, and novel religious practices.

Religious expression as interactive and technologically-innovative performance was viscerally realized in 2024 at UNLV in Anna Hennessey's immersive Re-Birth installation. We hope to build on that by encouraging further performative expressions of faith and joy, such as drumming, call & response, singing, dancing, all of which will be part of a unique session.

We also want to examine the complex intersections of religion with technology and science. Science and technology have always grown out of human performance and imagination. Mythology around science, grounded in different religious orientations, continues to fuel innovation and interaction with the novel and unexplored. Science-fiction and fantasy are also part of this vision and its intersections with religious ideation. We invite similar explorations into the future and the unknown.

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We encourage you to use contemporary media, performance, and scholarship to share your discoveries with us at ASU in 2025. We encourage you to reach out to other units to co-sponsor and collaborate in developing robust and innovative calls for papers.

We are very excited about our being together at Arizona State University!

Roberta Sabbath, Ph.D.
President Elect & Program Chair
Assistant Professor-in-Residence
English Department
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Conference Location

Memorial Union - Arizona State University

THANK YOU

This conference would not have been possible without the partnership and support of Arizona State University. We are particularly grateful for the work of our faculty representative, Dr. Souad T. Ali as well as ASU staff members Zoila Vazquez-Thompson & Brooke Aribi.

We especially want to thank Dr. Michael Crow, ASU President, & Dr. Nancy Gonzales, Executive Vice President and University Provost, for welcoming us to your incredible campus!

And a thank you to our sponsors as well:

Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, Dean of Humanities (\$4,000)

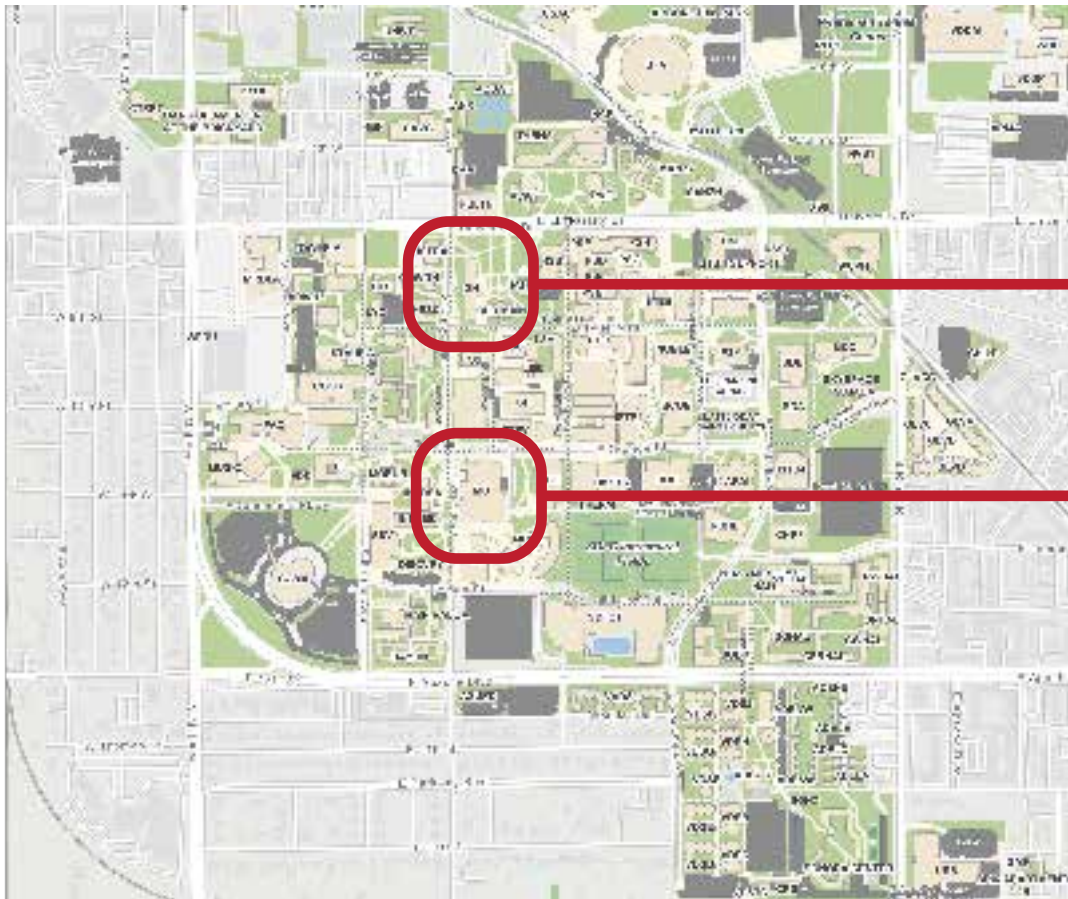
Dr. Richard Amesbury, Director, School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies (\$2,000)

Dr. Hava Samuelson, Director of the ASU Center for Jewish Studies (\$2,000)

Dr. Mike Tueller, Director, School of International Letters and Cultures (\$1,000)

Dr. Souad T. Ali, Founding Chair of the ASU Council for Arabic and Islamic Studies (\$1,000)

Dr. Ayanna Thompson, Executive Director, & Dr. Roben Espinosa, Director of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (\$1,000)

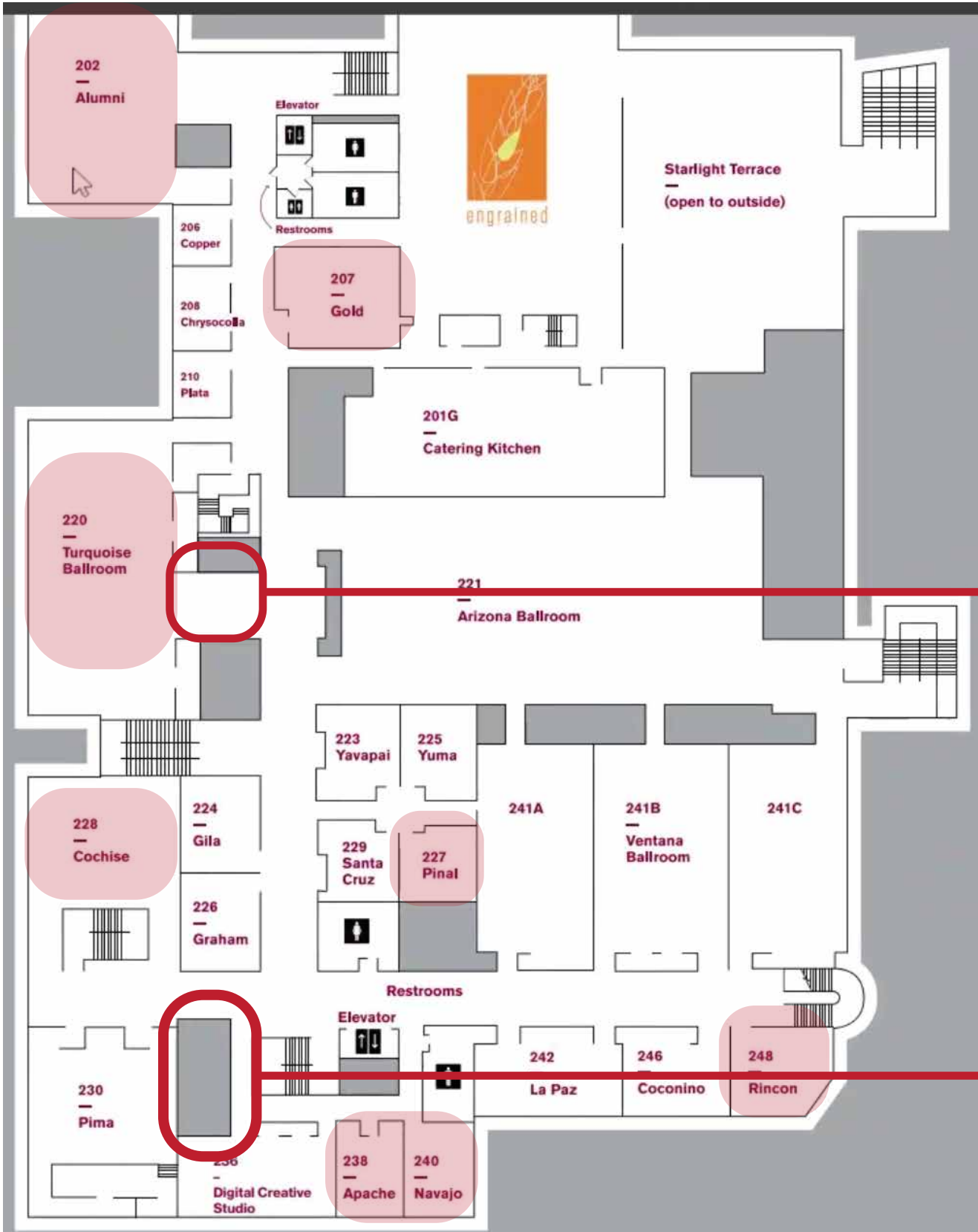


Durham Hall (Friday
Pre-Conference)

Memorial Union (Saturday
& Sunday Conference)

Memorial Union

Arizona State University



Friday, March 14

Pre-Conference - Durham Hall

12:00 – 4:00 PM

AARWR Board Meeting

DH 240

7:00 – 10:00 PM

Queer View (Public Event)

DH 210

“Pray Away” & Panel Discussion

Please join the Queer Caucus of the AAR/WR for Queer View 2025 - “Pray Away.” With the onslaught of anti-LGBTQ education, now more than ever we must educate and come together to fight back against oppression. “Pray Away” is an award-winning documentary that follows five evangelicals in the 1970s who break away and form Exodus International, a group that claims that gay people can become straight through prayer and conversion therapy. Following the film, there will be a discussion with LGBTQ+ leaders and religious scholars on how to not repeat history and work towards creating an open and accepting environment for all in the face of 2025 and beyond.

Saturday, March 15

First Session (9:30 – 11 AM) Memorial Union

Apache, MU 238

Christianity Unit Panel 1

Moderator: "Joey" Alan Le

- (1) Armen Oganessian, Grand Canyon University, "Rethinking the Levitical Law: The Theaterhouse of Redemption"
- (2) Roberta Sabbath, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, "Mary, Mother of Jesus: Prophetic Attributes and Moral Agent"
- (3) Halil Temizturk, Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi (Türkiye)/ Rice University (Texas/Houston), "Neo-Christian Mysticism: The Re-emergence of Independent Mystical Women (Beguines)"

Rincon, MU 248

Religions of Asia 1

Sacred Sensoria: Rituals and Performative Practices Across Asian Religious Traditions

Moderator: István Keul, University of Bergen

- (1) Juliette Lecorney, University of Strasbourg, "Hevajra cult in ancient Cambodia: meditative performances and tantric rituality"
- (2) Sneha Haldar, Independent Scholar, "Darsan and Sensory Immersion: Exploring Gaze in Hindu Religious Traditions"
- (3) Elsa Cuillé, University of Strasbourg, "Praying for Rain: Religious Performances to Control the Weather in Medieval China"
- (4) István Keul, University of Bergen, "Reconceptualizing Ritual in South Asia: Image Consecrations as Sociotechnical Events"

Alumni Lounge, MU 202

Environmental Performance and Social Justice Joint Session Organized by the Religion, Science, and Technology Unit, the Indigenous Religions Unit, and the Ecology and Religion Unit

Moderator: Avalon Jade Theisen, Arizona State University

- (1) Reed Metcalf, Fuller Theological Seminary: Ecotheologies: Tributaries, Evolutions, and Trajectories
- (2) Dolon Sarkar, Jawaharlal Nehru University: Caste, Ecology, and Gambhira performance
- (3) Valeria Vergani, Stanford University: Slaying the White Buffalo: Digital Prophecy and Embodied Authority in Indigenous Centered Climate Activism
- (4) Patrycja Badzinska, Jagiellonian University: Water, Decolonization, and Spirituality: Navajo Traditional Knowledge as a Form of Building Ecological Peace in the Face of Drought
- (5) Anugrah Brij, Bishop's College Kolkata: Water Pollution in India: An Eco-Ethical Evaluation

Gold Room, MU 207

Women's Caucus Session on Performativity in Religion Radical Performance in Leadership: Women's and Marginalized Faith, Spirituality, and Love in Male Dominant Religious Cultures

"There existed a radical space, albeit paradoxical, where nuns were able to subvert the patriarchal norms of twentieth-century American society," asserts Ph.D. Candidate Kim Fillion. "Female saints provide templates for the performance of faith for Coptic women that are largely absent in male-dominated Coptic literature," empowers Trevena Hanna, Ph.D. "Feminist methodology demonstrates the unequal emphasis on Milarepa's story over Woman Buddha Yeshe Tsogyal. Feminist and Postcolonial methods work to dismantle sexist epistemologies by reconstructing and drawing attention to previously missing or ignored persons of merit who have achieved formidable levels of achievement, or siddhi and religious leadership by women." Ph.D. Candidate Janice L. Poss.

For centuries, women in religion have created radical, subversive spaces for feminist faith and spirituality. These spaces have sometimes been at counter-intuitive and Christlike odds with male dominant religious structures and doctrines to teach all of us more about who we are as a faithful people in progressive and expansive ways that we perform our personal and community faith and spirituality.

This Panel for the AARWR Women's Caucus will explore Catholic nuns, Coptic female saints, and Tibetan Buddha Yeshe Tsogyal and how they subverted patriarchal religious structures and overcame restrictions on their lives as religious persons.

- (1) Kim Fillion, Claremont Graduate University, "The Sisters' Sacred Paradoxical Space: Mapping Truth to Freedom"
- (2) Trevena Hanna, Claremont Graduate University, "Female Saints as a Model for Liberation: The Experience of Coptic Women Today"
- (3) Malu Reynaud, University of South Florida, "Losing My Religion"
- (4) Janice L. Poss, Claremont Graduate University, "Buddha Yeshe mTsho-rgyal Performing a Women's Green Garland of Religious Leadership"

Cochise, MU 228

Catholic Studies 1

Moderator: Nathan McWeeney

- (1) Maria Clara Tanner, Arizona State University, "Building a Secular Nation: Freemasonry's Role in Columbia's Liberal Movement"
- (2) Carlos Piccone-Camere, PhD., Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, "Sacred Convergences, Different Creeds: Catholic and Andean Ritual Performances at Lima's Cerro San Cristóbal"
- (3) Thomas Davis, PhD, California State University San Bernardino, "Performing American Catholicism: Caritative and Calculative Practices among Catholic Social Workers"

Pinal, MU 227

Islamic Studies 1: Preaching, Spirituality, Jihad, and Technology

Moderator: Dr. Souad T. Ali, Arizona State University

- (1) Dr. Han Hsien Liew, Arizona State University, "The Affective Performance of Piety in Medieval Muslim Hortatory Preaching"
- (2) Dr. Mirna Lattouf, Arizona State University, "Islamic Thought and 21st Century Science, Technology, & Artificial Intelligence"
- (3) Jacqueline Shaw, California Lutheran University, "Jihad: An Exploration of Doctrine Over Time"
- (4) Sadia Mahmoud, Arizona State University, "Teaching Islam in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities"

Navajo, MU 240

NEW UNIT > Innovations in Chaplaincy Unit Practicing our Faith in Higher Education: Spiritual Leadership and Chaplaincy in Higher Education

Respondant: Rev. Dr. Garrett-Cobbina, Dean, San Francisco Theological Seminary

- (1) Sakena Young-Scaggs, MDiv, STM, PhD, Senior Associate Dean for Religious and Spiritual Life and Pastor of Stanford Memorial Church, Stanford University
- (2) Ineda Pearl, MDiv, Visiting Lecturer for Christian Spirituality, Interim Director, Spiritual Direction and Formation at San Francisco Theological Seminary, University of Redlands, Graduate School of Theology
- (3) Margo Eyring, Independent Scholar, Spiritual Director, Coracle and Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation
- (4) Dilys Brooks, PhD, BCC - Chaplain, Loma Linda University

Keynote Address (11:15 AM - 12 PM) Turquoise, MU 220

Keynote Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Nikia Smith Roberts

The Reverend Doctor Nikia Smith Robert is a Chau-Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Pomona College (California) in religious studies and ordained clergy in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Expanding her dissertation research, Dr. Robert founded Abolitionist Sanctuary®, a nonprofit organization and faith-based abolitionist movement leader committed to helping churches use public policy and transformative justice strategies to advocate for a more just and equitable society beyond prisons, policing and punishment.

Dr. Robert is also the Chief Executive Officer of Cultural Competency Consulting, LLC., which provides value-added diversity, equity and inclusion solutions to educational, corporate and non-profit organizations.



Prior to becoming an academic scholar, clergy and social entrepreneur, Dr. Robert worked for more than ten years in Big Four Public Accounting firms doing expatriate and international taxes. She also worked as a Franchise Controller for the largest investment bank on Wall Street. Dr. Robert is a native New Yorker and married with three children.

As an activist-scholar, Dr. Robert has organized, mobilized, rallied and spoken at highly visible protests against State-sponsored violence with Black Lives Matter, the Movement for Black Lives, Clergy for Black Lives, the NAACP and multi-religious communities. She sees her research as inextricably linked to praxis that is oriented toward social justice and grounded in the lived experiences of the oppressed.

Dr. Robert is an interdisciplinary scholar and expert whose research is located at the intersections of race, gender, and class with an emphasis on Black women and mass incarceration.

She is the author of the peer-reviewed article, "Penitence Plantation and the Penitentiary: A Liberation Theology for Lockdown America" (Harvard Graduate Journal, 2017). Her dissertation is titled, "Breaking The Law When The Law Breaks Us: A Womanist Theo-Ethical Approach to Public Policy and Criminal Justice Advocacy for the Black Church." Dr. Robert is a public lecturer, global speaker, ordained clergy, clinically-trained healthcare chaplain and teaches religious studies in higher education.

Dr. Robert has served the academic guild of religion as a Board Member with the Society of Christian Ethics. In this capacity, she was the first student to be nominated and elected by both the student membership and the Society with voice and vote privileges as a result of a historic change to the Society's bylaws. Under Dr. Robert's landmark tenure, she developed a student mentorship program and the inaugural Senior-Scholar in residence initiative. She also helped to reorganize the governing structure of students into a two-part entity that includes (2) Student Caucus Representatives and (2) Student Board Members. Also, Dr. Robert secured an unprecedented 100 percent increase in student funded initiatives.

Dr. Robert currently serves as a steering committee member for the Liberation Theologies group at the American Academy of Religion. She has also served on the planning committee for the Political Theology Network conference at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University.

Chairs Lunch (12:15 - 1:15 PM)

Turquoise, MU 220

Lunch Provided for Unit Chairs

Caucus Business Meetings

1:30 - 2:30 PM

Queer Caucus - Alumni Lounge, MU 202

Black Caucus - Gold Room, MU 207

Turquoise, MU 220 (NOTE: 1:30 - 3:00 PM)

Women's Caucus Event

Performing Biography: Women in Religion Wikipedia Project

Join us in our effort to address gender bias on Wikipedia by improving the coverage of women in religion on Wikipedia tied to this year's conference theme on performativity in religion. At this workshop, we will have expert Women in Religion Wikipedia Project colleagues speak to their actual feminist spiritual experience in actively creating biographies for Wikipedia and writing biographies for our sister publications in creating secondary sources about women in religion, of which we are now preparing our 5th volume.

Participants at this workshop will sign up as wiki-editors, create their personal user page, learn the basics of editing, create Wiki stubs, and make their first wiki-edits. More experienced editors can speak to our team about ongoing training and development, such as AI and other tools to enhance their writing and streamline their skills.

We will talk about using Wikipedia in the Classroom. If you have time before the conference, visit [Wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org) to sign up for an account in advance. Consider concerns about anonymity when choosing a "username."

Participants are also welcome to work on women from any religious, spiritual, or wisdom tradition who are not on the worklist. There will be plenty of time for questions and hands-on assistance. No need to be a technological expert! All are welcome!

Gold Room, MU 207 (NOTE: 2:45 - 4:15 TIME)

Psychology, Culture & Religion 1: Spirituality in the 21st Century: Technology, Drugs, and Healing, Oh My"

Moderator: Casey Crosbie

- (1) Fatima Zeynep Belen, Kirikkale University of Turkey. The Therapeutic Effect of Spiritual Texts in the Light of Bibliotherapy
- (2) Syed Farooq Mohyud Din, Rice University. A Critical Analysis of South Asian Spiritual Healers in the Digital Spotlight
- (3) Katie Hamaker, California Institute of Integral Studies. Psychedelics and Christianity
- (4) Peng Zhao, City University of Macau. Mindfulness 2.0: Performing Spiritual Healing in an AI Era
- (5) Junling Gao, The University of Hong Kong, A pressure point in Evolution: Spirituality as Medicine for Human Sustainability in an AI Era

Second Session (2:45 – 4:15 PM)

Alumni Lounge, MU 202

Buddhist Studies 1: Hermeneutical Strategies in the Interpretation of Buddhist Scriptures in China

Moderator: Jake E. Nagasawa, Macalester College

- (1) Xiaowen Zhou, University of Arizona, "Divine Speech and Liberation: The Evolution of Incantations in the Mātā ga Girl Narrative Across Early Chinese Scriptures"
- (2) Iris Li, University of Arizona, "Transcending Beauty: Candrottarā and Gender Dynamics in the Sutra of the Girl Candrottarā"
- (3) Tengyun Zhang, University of Arizona, "This World as the Pure Land: The Influence of the Vimalakīrti Sutra on 1930s Chinese Buddhist Social Activism"

Cochise, MU 228

Womanist/Pan-African Unit

Womanist Session

Moderator: Valerie Miles-Tribble, PhD – GTU /BST

- (1) Kimani Francois, Claremont Graduate University, "Womanism, American Pragmatism, and the Cultural Production of the Tragic Mulatta"
- (2) Chinasa Ezugha, University of Exeter, "Glossolalia: Speaking Joy and Resistance"
- (3) Glencie Rhedrick, California Institute of Integral Studies, PhD Student, "Pioneering the Possibilities: Afrofuturism, Wakanda, and the Soul's Call to Action"
- (4) Valerie Miles-Tribble, Berkeley School of Theology / GTU, "Conjuring Subversive Creativity: Jazzin' Womanist Expression and the Dancing Mind"

Rincon, MU 248

Pagan Studies

Paganism in Performance

Moderator, Polly Springhorn, Cherry Hill Seminary

- (1) KP Hollon Miller, Starr King School for the Ministry, "We Have Found a Witch, May We Burn Her? Creating Pagan Liberatory Praxis for American Minority Religious Freedom."
- (2) Polly Springhorn Cherry Hill Seminary, "Reviving a Greco-Egyptian Ritual from late Antiquity in the 21st Century CE."

Roundtable discussion: Inspirations and challenges of performing Paganism in the current political climate.

Panelists

Lu Zheng, East Asian Studies at the University of Arizona

Polly Springhorn, Cherry Hill Seminary

KP Hollon Miller, Starr King School for the Ministry

Second Session (2:45 – 4:15 PM)

Apache, MU 238

Islamic Studies 2: Islamic Sufism, Modernity, Classification, & Islamophobia

Moderator: Dr. Mirna Lattouf, Arizona State University

(1) Dr. Souad T. Ali, Arizona State University, "Muslim and Western Perceptions of Sufism and the Development of Sufi Orders in the Modern World."

(2) Fadime Apaydin, University of California, Riverside, "Examining Different Approaches to Classifying Muslims"

(3) Hamide Ulupinar, İzmir Katip Çelebi University, Turkey, "The Effect of Dhikr on the Spiritual Ascension of a Person in Sufism"

(4) Khandaker Kabir Uddin, Liverpool Hope University, "Islamophobic Representation of 'Allahu Akbar' in the Western Media and Its Impact on Muslims in the West"

Pinal, MU 227

Religion and the Arts Session 3

Moderator: Tamisha Tyler, Fuller Theological Seminary

(1) Christina Huang, University of Pennsylvania, "The benevolent one's mind was touched"

(2) Ruby Lillian Sonnek, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, "Bharatanatyam and Alchemy: Individuation in the structure of Indian dance"

(3) Jieyan (Jessica) Zheng, University of the West, "Steeping Sati: Integrating Tea Ceremony into Spiritual Care"

(4) Sandrine Welte, Independent Scholar, Italy, "Performing the Late Antique Ritual Object"

Navajo, MU 240

Queer Studies in Religion Panel - "When You're in the Crosshairs: Historical Accounts of LGBTQIA+ Targeting by Religion, Government, and Public Figures"

Moderator: Anjeanette LeBoeuf

This session will feature a discussion of the historicity of the LGBTQIA+ Community and their relationships with religious organizations, government and policies, and public figures that frequently target them. Is history repeating itself? Are we seeing a new religious right movement? This session will be an open space for AAR/WR members to discuss ways to combat the rise in hatred and anti-DEI initiatives and recount how we can learn from history to save our future.

Panelists

Dr. John Erickson

Dr. Marie Cartier

Third Session (4:30 – 6 PM)

Rincon, MU 248

Christianity Unit Panel 2

Moderator: Roberta Sabbath

(1) Andrei Bogdan, University of West Timișoara, "The Cross and the Canvas: Missiology through Artistic Expression in Contexts of War and Genocide"

(2) "Joey" Alan Le, Independent Scholar, "Bearers of God's Image: Human Dignity Amidst Political Polarization"

(3) Anugrah Brij, Bishop's College, Kolkata, "The Theology of Sadhu Sundar Singh and its Relevance to Modern Day Mission"

Alumni Lounge, MU 202

Religion and the Arts Session 2

Moderator: Tamisha Tyler, Fuller Theological Seminary

(1) Jiushuang Chen, Independent Scholar, "Transcendence and Trauma: Christian Symbolism in Chinese Modern Art Responding to Sociopolitical Realities"

(2) Johann Choi, Arizona State University, "Moral Injury's Tragic Turn: An Aristotelian Poetics of Combat Trauma"

(3) Heather Wetherholt, Arizona State University, "Comics and Catharsis: Book Club with Deconverts"

(4) Reilly Donovan, Arizona State University, "The Electronic Enlightenment: The Rise of Spiritualism in EDM Festivals"

(5) Nathan McWeeney, University of Southern California, "Producing Catholicism through Art: Major 20th Century Producers and Ongoing Visions"

Gold Room, MU 207

Catholic Studies 2

Moderator: Samantha Kang

(1) Ahmad Raza Ul Habib, PhD., University of Narowal, Punjab, Pakistan (Pending Confirmation), "Identifying the new socio-religious themes for futuristic Christian-Muslim interaction"

(2) Michael Lucas, California Polytechnic State University (Pending Confirmation), "Tourism and the Saturated Phenomena of the Wooden Churches of Slovakia"

(3) Melchor John P. Francisco, Independent Scholar (Pending Confirmation), "A Heteroglossic Analysis of Entropy-Negentropy Dynamics in the Black Nazarene's Traslación"

Saturday, March 15

Third Session (4:30 PM – 6:00 PM)

Pinal, MU 227

Black Religion & Theology 1: Black Religious Expression & Social Justice: AI, Post-Humanism, Slavery, and the Academy

Moderator: Aaron Grizzell

(1) Daniela Munoz-Martinez, California Lutheran University, "How did pro-slavery and anti-slavery Christians interpret the Bible and produce different answers to the question of slavery's continuation in the nation?"

(2) Junling GAO, The University of Hong Kong, "Synchronizing Humanity: The Revival Power of African Drumming and Neural Coherence in an Emerging AI Age"

(3) Noah Benjamin Humphrey, Yale University, "Choosing the Sacred: Marchman's Selection in Education"

(4) Oluwatosin John IBITOYE, Kwara State University, "Sacred Implications of Music and Song Texts in Igogo Festival of Owo People in Ondo State, Nigeria"

(5) Alexis Dunbar, University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology, "And Go Home to my Lord and be Free' Black Jesus, Death & Posthumanist Liberation"

Cochise, MU 228

Philosophy of Religion 1 – Navigating Diversity: New Approaches to Religious Pluarlism

Moderator: Mitchel Hickman

(1) Miranda Judson, Arizona State University, "Can Pluralists Choose a Religion?"

(2) Kristen Miller, Arizona State University, "Secular Tragedy and Religious Pluralism: Analyzing the Role of Areligiosity in John Hick and S. Mark Heim's Pluralism"

(3) Tamim Raihan, Arizona State University, "Al-Ghazali's Inclusivist Perspective on Non-Muslim Salvation in Islamic Theology"

Apache, MU 238

Religion, Science & Technology Unit 1

(1) Chang In Sohn, Graduate Theological Union: "The Future of Church Communities in a Digital Age"

(2) Liming Liu and Pauline Hope Cheong, Arizona State University: "Faithful Innovations: Performing Authority & Managing Institutional Logics in A.I. Automation"

(3) Rizwan Virk, Arizona State University: "Modern Technoscientific Religious Narratives and the Simulation Hypothesis"

Navajo, MU 240

Women and Religion: Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic Historical and Spiritual Perspectives of Women and the Feminine

Moderator: Emily Silverman

(1) "Walking on the Path of No Return: Wandering of the Saint Poetess of India," Arpita Mitra, Independent Scholar

(2) "Revealed and Unrevealed Womanly Spiritual Experience in Ta'zieh as an Iranian Shia Ritual Performance" Maryam alsadat Siahpoosh, Independent Scholar

(3) "Legacy of the Sea Dragon's Daughter in Lotus Sūtra and Buddha's Declaration of 'their Faculty Can Be Better than Men': Female Monastic Tradition in Japanese Nipponzan

Myōhōji" Order, Sourajit Ghosh, PhD Scholar in The Global Program, School Of Buddhist Studies, Philosophy and Comparative Religions, Nalanda University (2020-2023) GURUKUL Fellow 2018, Foundation Of Universal Responsibility of HH the Dalai Lama

(5) "Experiencing Life as a Muslim Woman in the United States: Personal Journeys," Fadime Apaydin, University of California, Riverside

(6 – 6:45 PM)

Reception & Awards Presentation Turquoise, MU 220

With welcoming comments by Amalia Pallares, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence, ASU & Professor, School of Transborder Studies

(6:45 – 7:45 PM)

Presidential Address Turquoise, MU 220

(8 – 10 PM)

Black Caucus Reception Turquoise, MU 220

Sunday, March 16

First Session (9:30 – 11 AM)

Cochise, MU 228

Buddhist Studies 2: Buddhist Studies 2

Moderator: Jake E. Nagasawa, Macalester College

(1) Vaishali Gaidhani, University of the West, "The Concept of Faith-'Saddhā' as a 'Lived Religion' Seen in the Pāli Canonical Texts"

(2) Christina Huang, University of Pennsylvania, "The Benevolent One's Mind was Touched"

(3) Kedao Tong, Stanford University, "Right Feeling for Animals in Suffering: Emotions in the Buddhist Practice of Releasing Lives"

Apache, MU 238

Psychology, Culture & Religion & Goddess Studies

Co-Sponsored Panel

Rituals that Animate Practice: Religious and Political Beliefs through the Centuries

Moderators: Katherine Kunz & Kali Tanikella

(1) Ramazan Akkir, Arizona State University. The Perspective of Muslims Living in the United States on the Democratic Party: The Case of Arizona State

(2) Manasi Chokshi, College of Architecture Mumbai. To understand the role of mythologies of village deities (gram devis and devatas) in defining the culture of the place

(3) Sandrine Welte, University of Venice. A Mere History? Late Antique 'Historiola'-Magic as Forms of Ritually (P)re-Enacting the Future

(4) Alexandr Zamuşinski, University of California, Riverside. Religious Naturalism: The Performance of Nonsupernaturalist Forms of Religion

Navajo, MU 240 (NOTE TIME: 11:15 AM - 12:45 PM)

Graduate Student Professional Development Roundtable "Transforming Graduate Student Professional Development into Community-Building"

Moderator: Meera Tanikella, Graduate Theological Union

(1) Kimberly Diaz, University of California Riverside, "From (C)urriculum (V)itae to (C)ourse of (V)eins"

(2) Avalon Jade Theisen, Arizona State University, "Time Management"

(3) Meera Tanikella, Graduate Theological Union, "The Empathetic Encounter: Redefining Difference and Mutual Enrichment in Graduate Student Spaces"

Pinal, MU 227

Womanist/Pan-African Studies

Pan-African Session

Moderator: Sakena Young-Scaggs, PhD, Stanford

(1) Kimberly Carter, California Institute of Integral Studies, "Wakanda Forever: Afrofuturism, Community, and Healing in the Era of Global Upheaval"

(2) Dr. Jeannette LW Kiel, Sacramento City College, "Connecting with My Ancestors: An Integral Examination of My Journey To and Beyond Africa"

(3) Keyona Saquile Lazenby, Graduate Theological Union, "Mother Earth, Soul Care, and Earth Ethics: An Ecowomanist Response to Environmental Justice"

Alumni Lounge, MU 202

Jewish Studies 1

Moderator: Roberta Sabbath

(1) Serdar Cihan Güleç, Independent Scholar (Istanbul, Turkey), "Performing Sacred Geography: Toponyms as Ritual Elements in the Exodus of the Israelites"

(2) Thibault Wozniak, University of Strasbourg (France), "עֵקֶד יְגֹמֵל, 'The time of the end' in Daniel's Eschatology"

(3) Zeynep Akkir, Sakarya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü (Türkiye), "Islam Rebuttal Tradition: An Analysis of Karafi's Critique of The Torah"

(4) Alexander Marcus, Franklin & Marshall College, "Rabbi Petachiah's Peregrinations in Chronological and Chorological Perspective"

Sunday, March 16

Second Session (11:15 AM – 12:45 PM)

Alumni Lounge, MU 202

Disability Studies Unit

Performativity, Bodies, and Religion

Moderator & Respondent: Elizabeth Staszak, Independent Scholar

(1) Payton Miller, Fresno Pacific University, "A Ministering Body: Empowering Disabled Bodies to serve as Ministry Leaders in light of the Resurrected Christ as the Heavenly High Priest in Hebrews"

(2) Janice L. Poss, Claremont Graduate University, "Para-able"

Apache, MU 238

Indigenous Religions

Religion as Art and Ecospirituality: Interpretations, Liberation, and the Sacred

Moderator: Delores (Lola) Mondragón, University of California Santa Barbara

(1) Maciej Karasinski, Stanford University, "Dancing Leopards and the Divine Snakes - Ecospirituality in the Sacred Groves of South India"

(2) Isabella Mondragon, Institute of American Indian Art, "The Mechanization of a Country: the Modernization of Diego Rivera's Version"

(3) Alexia Lye, California Lutheran University, "Artifacts Consumed"

Rincon, MU 248

Religions of Asia 2

Transcending Borders: Ritual Adaptations and Performative Innovations

Moderator: Pablo Vazquez, Graduate Theological Union

(1) Ken Yanai Flores, California Lutheran University, "Shinto: A Place-based Religion in the Digital Age"

(2) Bakreswar Panda, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara University (Deemed University), "A Universal Approach to Religion: Vivekananda's Integration of Spiritual Paths"

(3) Naohito Miura, Harvard University, "Sacred Performance: The Role of Music in Sekai Meshia Kyō's Transnational Religious Practice"

(4) Pablo Vazquez, Graduate Theological Union, "Adaptability and Theological Flexibility on Zoroastrian Social Media"

Pinal, MU 227

Black Religion & Theology 2: Black Religious Expression & Social Justice – A Historical Perspective

Moderator & Respondent: Julius Bailey

(1) Moses Moore, Arizona State University, "The Legacy of Edward Blyden for Historians of African Christianity"

(2) Aaron Grizzell, Graduate Theological Union, Respondent

Gold Room, MU 207

Jewish Studies 2

Moderator: Alex Marcus

(1) daniella etel courban, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, "Contemporary Visual Midrash on Creation inspired by the Sefer Yetzirah"

(2) Rabbi Cookie Lea Olshein, Congregation Ner Tamid, Henderson, Nevada / Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Zoom and YouTube and Facebook Live, Oh My! Post-Covid Changes in the Use of Technology for Jewish Worship and Learning"

(3) Isobel-Marie Johnston (Isobel) Arizona State University "Mikvah Identity Politics"

Cochise, MU 228

Islamic Studies 3: Gender, Identity, and Islamic Law

Moderator: Dr. Souad T. Ali, Arizona State University

(1) Süheyla Aksoy, Dokuz Eylül University, Turkey, "Reconsidering Islamic Legal and Sociological Paradigms: Woman and The Notion of Honor"

(2) Fatma Cakmak, Harran University, Turkey, "A Sociological Analysis of "The Status of Women in Islam" in the Context of Hajj/Pilgrimage"

(3) Kader TAŞCI, Independent Scholar, "Syrian Migrant Women's Perception of Gender and Religion"

(4) Dr. Jamil Akhtar, University of the Punjab, "Reinterpreting Sacred Authority: Women as Islamic Jurists for Addressing Gender Justice in Pakistan"

AARWR 2025 Business Meeting

1 - 2:30 PM

Lunch is provided. All members of AAR are encouraged to attend.

Sunday, March 16

Third Session (2:45 – 4:15 PM)

Pinal, MU 227

Ecology & Religion

**Ecological And Spiritual Approaches To Peacebuilding
In A Fractured World**

**Moderator: Matt Switzer, California Institute of
Integral Studies**

(1) Elsa Barron, University of Notre Dame: Frameworks for
Environmental Peacebuilding and Faith Traditions

(2) Daniel McFee, Mercyhurst University and Colorado State
University: Religious NGOs and Environmental Policy: Examining
their role and impact on the UN's Goal for Clean Water and
Sanitation

(3) Avalon Jade Theisen, Arizona State University: EcoSikh: Peace
Through Planting Trees

(4) Sam Harrelson, California Institute of Integral Studies:
"Ecological Intentionality: Performing Peace Beyond Human
Boundaries

(5) Cody Osguthorpe, Arizona State University: Magic, Witchcraft,
and Rebellion in the British Atlantic World

Gold Room, MU 207

**Religions of Asia and Islamic Studies (Joint Session)
Sacred Spaces and Ritual Expressions in
Religious Practices**

Moderator: Souad Ali, Arizona State University

(1) Selman Yilmaz, Ankara University, "Religious Healing Practices
in Turkey"

(2) Eyüp Elkoca, Indiana University / Istanbul University, "The
Impact of Visits to the Tomb of Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib in the
Early Periods on Martyrdom Visitation Rituals

(3) Abulhasan Mohsin, Arizona State University, "Education in
relation to the Q'uran and the Mosque"

(4) Sadia Mahmoud, Arizona State University, "Teaching Islam in
the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities"

Cochise, MU 228

Philosophy of Religion 2

Performing the Modern: Things, Selves, Worlds

Moderator: Shakir Stephen

(1) Miriam Hamburger, University of California, Santa Barbara,
"Performing Things, Forgetting World"

(2) Mitchel Hickman, University of California, Santa Barbara, "The
Present-Present Age: A Kierkegaardian Approach to Performing the
Techno-Mediated Self"

(3) Dane Sawyer, University of LaVerne, "Self-Realization Without a
Self: A Buddhist-Existentialist Inquiry"

(4) Shakir Stephen, University of California, Santa Barbara, "Working
Through Modernity: Nietzsche, Vocation, and the Performance of
Values"

Virtual Only Session

Religion and the Arts Session 1

Moderator: Anna Hennessey, Graduate Theological Union

(1) Adrei Bogdan, University of West Timișoara, "The Cross and the
Canvas: Missiology through Artistic Expression in Contexts of War
and Genocide"

(2) Anugrah Brij, Bishop's College Kolkata, "The Gospel of Lying and
the Gospel of Liberation in the Israel-Palestine Conflict"

(3) Anna Hennessey, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, "Traces
of People: Art and Genocide in Colombia, Palestine, and Spain"

Alumni Lounge, MU 202

Religion, Science & Technology 2

(1) Elif Kiran & Avanlee Peterson, Arizona State University: "Navigat-
ing the Digital Landscape: Innovative Leadership for 'e-Believers'"

(2) Victoria Price, Graduate Theological Union: "The Digital
Embrace: Amma's Instagram Strategy and Its Impact on Global
Spiritual Leadership"

(3) Porsia Tunzi, Graduate Theological Union: "Her Faith, Her
Followers: Women Reimagining Religious Authenticity, Communi-
ty, and Authority in the Age of Instagram"



Western Region