

**Religion, Technology, and Innovation
American Academy of Religion Western Region
Annual Conference**



**University of Nevada, Las Vegas
March 13-15, 2026**

Welcome



Welcome to our University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus and the greater Las Vegas Valley, a place that mixes tradition and innovation. Where we truly believe Stronger Together

Welcome to the AAR-WR world of possibility, challenge, and being all we can be, of hope and friendship.

AAR-WR launched my academic career and gave me the confidence that my voice mattered. Conference scholarship and organizational friendships have all helped me refine my intellectual pursuits and passions.

We welcome your commitment to make our organization more vibrant, relevant, and supportive. We truly hope you enjoy our conference experience.

Roberta Sabbath, PhD
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
President, American Academy of Religion Western Region

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| | |
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Awards

The AARWR Humanitarian Award honors exceptional community activists who promote interfaith dialogue, shared spirituality, and political activism geared to protect and honor the practice and the members of all faiths. This year, we honor the following:

UNLV President Chris Heavey has dramatically led the campus in recognizing diverse faiths through programming, student and faculty support, and his own leadership style.

Gard Jameson, Co-Founder and President of the Southern Nevada Interfaith Council, helped found SNIC thirty-five years ago and has been a high-profile community activist not only to elevate the spirituality, knowledge, and dialogue amongst faiths but also to reach out across regional and global interfaith platforms. His internationally recognized work on compassion brings him on many global journeys, conferences, and leadership roles.

Aleda Nelson, Co-Founder of the Southern Nevada Interfaith Council, also founded Camp Anytown, a several-day, mountain retreat where high school-age students gather to share life experiences and appreciate their multicultural origins.

Thank You to Our Donors

Our sincerest gratitude to all the community and UNLV donors that helped make this event possible:

English Department
Sociology Department
Philosophy Department
Political Science Department
World Languages and Cultures Department
Interdisciplinary and Gender Studies
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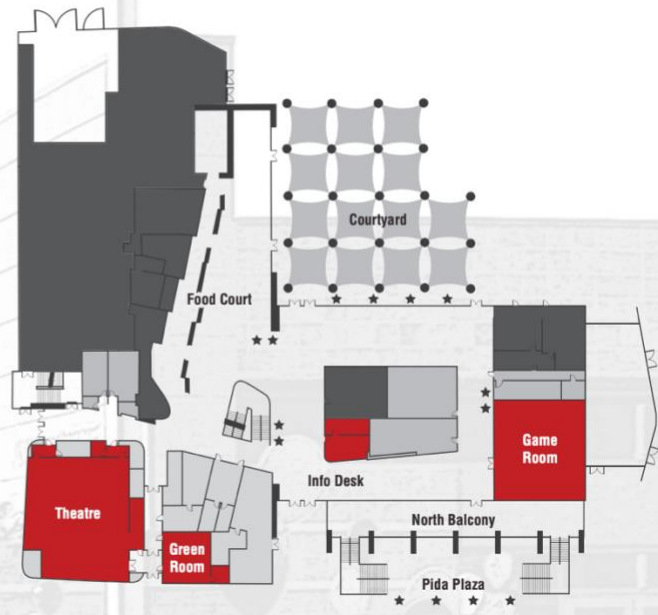
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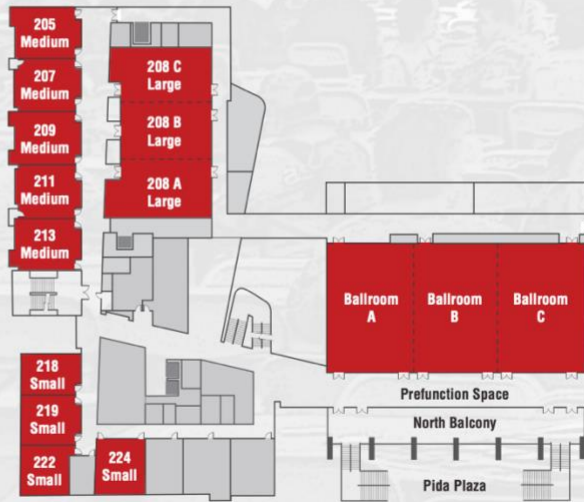


Student Union First Floor

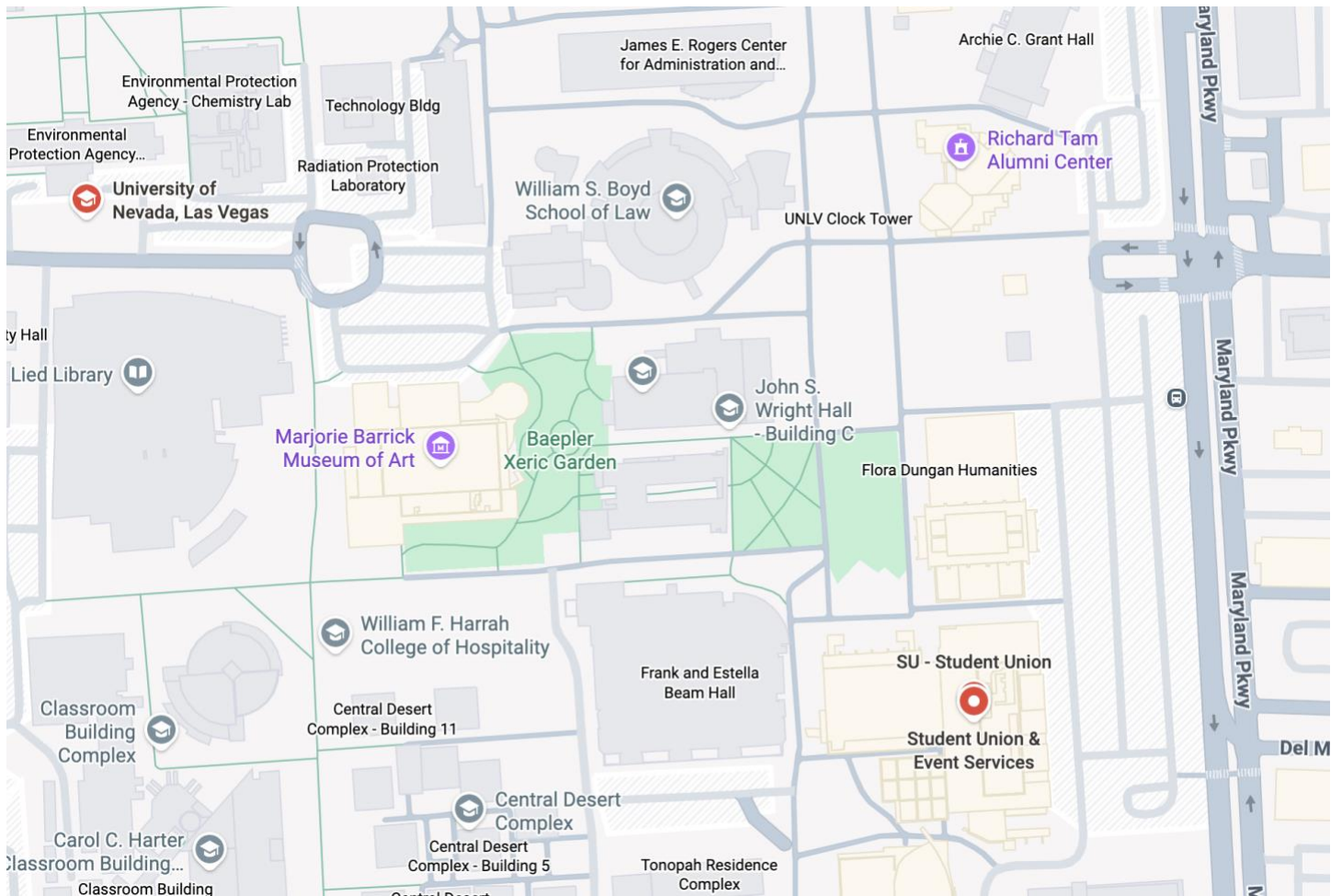
★ Marketing Tables



Student Union Second Floor



ALL Rooms in the program begin with "SU" for Student Union. With the exception of the Keynote, all panels are on the second floor of the Student Union. The Keynote is in the Philip J. Cohen Theatre on the first floor.



Friday's Queer View event takes place at the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art.

Saturday & Sunday's Panels and Keynote take place on the First and Second Floors of the Student Union. Parking is free in front of the Student Union on Saturday & Sunday.

Saturday's evening reception, Presidential Address, and Black Caucus events take place at the Richard Tam Alumni Center.

Agenda

Friday, March 13

12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

AARWR Board Meeting

The Board Meeting is open to all members of AAR. In-person attendance by invite-only. A Zoom link for observers will be provided the week of the Conference.

7:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Queer View 2026

“Baby, You Are My Religion” Film Screening & Panel Discussion
Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art Theater, UNLV

Hosted by the Queer Caucus, Queer View is a free and public event. We will screen this compelling documentary directed by filmmaker Kimberly Esslinger that explores identity and community within lesbian bars and LGBTQ+ religious spaces. Following the film, there will be a **panel discussion with the cast and filmmaker**, offering insights into the intersections of religion and LGBTQ+ life, and how we can build inclusive, affirming communities in 2026 and beyond.

Saturday, March 14

8:00 AM Registration Opens, UNLV Student Union, 2nd Floor Lobby

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM Session 1

CHRISTIANITY UNIT

SU 205

Moderator: Charles William Johnson, Utah State University

“Joey” Alan Le, Independent Scholar/Director of Spiritual Formation
“Christian Spiritual Practices for the Phone-Based Life”

Alexander Hurtsellers, University of Exeter/Christ the Saviour Seminary
“Asceticism Against Technique: The Predicament of Technology and the Orthodox Tradition”

John-Mark Rieser, Independent Scholar
“CTRL + ALT + DEFEAT: The Online Christian Counter-Movement to Black Israelism and the Conscious Community”

ISLAMIC STUDIES: Islamic Law, Gender, and Ethical Authority in the Age of Technology

SU 207

Moderator: Souad T. Ali, Arizona State University

Ayşe Keskin Sağlam, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
“From Dust to Data: Muslim Belonging and Gendered Authority in the Age of AI”

Ahmed Khater, Graduate Theological Union
“Contemporary Jurisprudence and the Use of Technology in Islamic Family Law”

Faqiat Afolake Adeaga, Syracuse University
“Wal-‘Asri and the Apocalyptic World: An Islamic Sharia Compliance Model in Africa”

Souad T. Ali, Arizona State University
“Islamic Law: A Focus on Aspects of Western Scholarship on Hadith”

QUEER STUDIES

SU 209

Moderator: Marie Cartier, California State University, Northridge

Gry Jeanett Apeland, Fuller Theological Seminary
“Psychological Safety in Psychotherapy: The Role of Therapist Religiosity, Affirming Attitudes, and LGBTQIA+ Identity in Sexual Minority Client Perceptions”

Stephen W. Simpson, Fuller Theological Seminary
“LGBTQIA+ Religion, Identity, and Queer Loss: Rethinking the Magnitude of LGBTQ+ Religious Exile”

Emilio Garica, University of Las Vegas, Nevada
“LGBTQ+ People and Islam”

RELIGIONS OF ASIA: Technology and the Transformation of Asian Religious Thought

SU 211

Moderator: István Keul, University of Bergen

Francesco Maria Catanzaro, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
“Boundless Compassion? Universal Buddhahood from Plants to Digital Avatars”

István Keul, University of Bergen
“Ritual as Technology in South Asia”

Quentin Xavier Smith, San Jose State University
“Beyond Western Narratives: Ge Hong 葛洪 and the Scientific Foundations of Chinese Alchemy”

Musa Osman Karatosun, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University
“Taoism and AI: A Convergence of Ancient Wisdom and Modern Technology”

Session 1 Continued (9:00 AM – 10:30 AM)

CATHOLIC STUDIES

SU 213

Davide Marino, Independent Scholar, Pontifical Gregorian University
"Selective Modernity: The Papacy's Complex Relationship with Technology and Innovation in the Nineteenth Century"

Suzanne Tabutol, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
"Playing at Religion: Catholic Play Spaces in Literature"

Philip Conklin, University of California Santa Cruz
"How to Get off your Phone: Catholic Mystic Technologies of Discipline"

Nick Thacker, University of California Santa Cruz
"To Join the Ranks of the Opposition: Pasolini, Bad Faith, and Catholic Renewal"

Lauren Barbato, University of Delaware
"A Cure for a Broken Body (Politic)?: RRM and the Institutionalization of Catholic Biomedical Technology in a Post-IVF World"

WOMEN AND RELIGION: Feminine Agency and Power
SU 218

Radhika Janakiram, Acharya Institute of Graduate Studies
"Kotravai: Reclaiming the Dravidian Goddess as a Site of Feminine Power, Resistance, and Religious Transformation"

Emily Leah Silverman, Graduate Theological Union
"Jewish Women Agency in the Bene Israel of Mumbai: The actresses of Bollywood"

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM

Keynote
Philip J. Cohen Theatre
FIRST FLOOR - UNLV Student Union

"An AI Made For Us," Greg Cootsona

In this talk, Greg Cootsona explores AI through a multi-religious framework, examining how digital tools reshape human formation, identity, and spirituality. He draws on C. S. Lewis's cautionary vision of "the birth of the machine," Michel Foucault's critique of authorial intentionality, and Albert Borgmann's concept of "focal practices," setting these alongside Kate Crawford's critique of AI's embedded power structures, Noreen Herzfeld's theological account of human-technology relations, Thich Nhat Hanh's mindful awareness, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Islamic vision of human stewardship. Cootsona interrogates what makes humans unique amid machine intelligence, confronts how biased technologies reflect and reinforce human power relations, and calls religious communities toward wisdom practices—such as Sabbath—as forms of resistance to AI's colonization of our attention and our human longing for transcendence.

Greg Cootsona is Executive Director of AI and Faith, a nonprofit exploring the intersection of artificial intelligence and religious communities. He just retired as lecturer in Comparative Religion and Humanities at California State University, Chico, and is an ordained Presbyterian Church (USA) minister. Greg has authored multiple books including *Science and Religions in America* (Routledge, 2023) and *Negotiating Science and Religion in America* (Routledge, 2020). He has directed \$4.6 million in grants from organizations including the John Templeton Foundation, the Lilly Endowment, and the American Academy of Religion. He holds a B.A. from U.C. Berkeley, an M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from the Graduate Theological Union in systematic and philosophical theology with an emphasis on the relationship of theology and science. Greg has appeared on major media outlets including CNN, NBC's Today Show, and NPR, and has spoken at universities including Columbia, Rice, and Duke. He serves, or has served, on advisory councils for BioLogos, Sinai and Synapses, the Oxford Interfaith Forum, and the AAAS's Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion. He is vice president of AAR's western region.

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Lunch

We are pleased to offer boxed lunch to ALL attendees. Unit Chairs will gather in SU 205 for their annual Chairs Luncheon and all other attendees are invited to attend in SU 207 for a networking lunch.

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM

Session 2

CHRISTIANITY UNIT

SU 205

Moderator: “Joey” Alan Le, Independent Scholar/Director of Spiritual Formation

Hasan H. Degerli, University of Iowa

“A Saint Who Kills an Emperor: Hagiographical Logic in the Mercurius Tradition”

Charles William Johnson, Utah State University

“The Library of the Lord’: The Evolution of Latter-day Saint Canonical Notions”

Mena Basta, Claremont Graduate University

“Tree Trunks, Streams, and Veins: Rethinking How We Map Denominational History in Teaching Christianity”

DISABILITY STUDIES

SU 207

Moderator: Elizabeth Staszak

Dr. Yolande François, Université Jean Moulin

“Mediating the Sacred through Technology and the Body in the Age of Artificial Intelligence”

Prof. Dr. Aslı Yurdigül and Yusuf Yurdigül, Atatürk University

“Remote Mourning and Digital Remembrance: Reconfiguring Online Cemetery Visits for Persons with Disabilities in Islamic Practice”

Elizabeth Staszak and Bea Rios, Independent Scholars

“Joni Eareckson Tada’s Evangelical Disability Theology and its Influence on the Church through Social Media”

Session 2 Continued (1:15 PM – 2:45 PM)

JOINT SESSION—RELIGIONS OF ASIA & ISLAMIC STUDIES:

Digital Transformations of Religion: Education, Consciousness, Archives and Authority

SU 209

Moderator: Souad T. Ali, Arizona State University

Vahdeddin Şimşek, Kırıkkale University

“The Utilization of Artificial Intelligence in Religious Education”

Adnan Bülent Baloğlu, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University

Zişan Cihangir Işın, Ankara Bilim University

Beyşan Tarık Işın, Ankara University

Hilal Fidan, Nişantaşı University

Tamer Işın, IMED Surgical Technology Inc.

“The Ontological Mindfulness of Ibn Sina: From Hayy ibn Yaqzan to AI Consciousness”

Hacer Gergin, Karabük University

“Archiving the Light: Digitizing the Turfan Manichaean Manuscripts and Reconsidering Apocalyptic Unveiling”

Büşra Bilgin, Independent Scholar

“Affective Islam and Algorithmic Authority: Gendered Religious Agency in Turkey’s Digital Sphere”

RELIGION AND THE ARTS

SU 211

Moderator: Kali (Meera) Tanikella

Kelsey Chen, Stanford University

“An Other Science: Silkpunk, Speculation, and the Making of a Taoist Technoscience”

Cole Cloyd, Arizona State University

“What the Gods Made for Fun: Representations of Religion in Historical Strategy Games”

Jeffrey Cobbold, California Institute of the Arts, Herb Alpert School of Music

“Experimental Readings of Christian Theological Texts Through Human Voices, Speech Synthesis, and Voice-Based Sound Art”

Felipe E. Agredano, Los Angeles Community College

“Sacred and Profane Cholas and Deities: Yolanda López’s Iconography of Resistance to Contemporary Immigration Politics, Deportations, and Disappearances”

WOMANIST/PAN AFRICAN UNIT

SU 213

Moderator: Sakena Young-Scaggs, Stanford University

Lisa Asedillo, Pacific School of Religion

“Inheriting My Mother’s Gardens: Tracing Ancestral Lineage as Sacred Technology”

Kimberly Carter, California Institute of Integral Studies

“Digital Testimony and the Reconfiguration of Religious Authority: A Womanist Analysis of Instagram Communities”

Denicia Monay Ratley, Babson College

“A Systems Tale: Naming the Syndrome Reclaiming the Imposter”

Debra Murray, Independent Scholar

“The Digital Hush Harbor: PIVOT OS and the ‘Survival Sass’ of AI-Driven Sovereignty”

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Session 3

RELIGIONS OF ASIA: Digitizing the Sacred: Digital Mediation and Devotional Innovation

SU 205

Moderator: Souad T. Ali, Arizona State University

Anand Ranjan, The University of Edinburgh

“Reconceptualising Hindu Religiosity: The ‘Appification’ of Deities and Religious Practices in India”

Hammet Arslan & Hilal Nur Turan, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University

“Virtual Temples and Digital Rituals: Technological Innovations in Buddhist Practices”

Elif Kıran, Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University

Avanlee Peterson, Arizona State University

“Ritual Presence and Algorithmic Authority in Contemporary Japanese Buddhism”

Zeynep Karlık, Independent Scholar

“Digital Hypnosis: Evaluating the Effects of Social Media on Religious Psychology from an Islamic Perspective”

Session 3 Continued (3:00 PM – 4:30 PM)

JOINT SESSION—GRADUATE STUDENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & DISABILITIES STUDIES: Graduate Student Professional Development and Hypernormalization

SU 207

Moderator & Respondent: Elizabeth Staszak, Independent Scholar

Kimberly Diaz, University of California Riverside
“Is There a Poolside for the Educator? A Deep Dive into the Hypernormalization of Artificial Intelligence (AI)”

Zaira Vidal Cortes, Independent Scholar
“Mentorship Beyond Hypernormalization: Supporting Graduate Students in Precarious Academic Contexts”

PAGAN STUDIES

SU 209

Moderator: Polly Springhorn, Cherry Hill Seminary

Contemporary Pagans have long grappled with and embraced technology and innovation. In material culture, we find matches replaced with electric igniters, and continuing differences of opinion about photographing altars, videos of rituals, and music playback devices, computers, and mobile phones in ritual spaces. Religionists have used technology to communicate and connect through technology – from the BBSes of the 1980s, to the alt.pagan and related UseNet groups and the birth of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s; to cyber-rituals on IRC channels and Skype, to the Zoom rituals of COVID pandemic quarantine. In the 21st century we find #WitchTok and pop culture witches transforming fundamental aspects of Paganism. Our panel will delve into these and other topics and invite a multi-generational discussion with attendees.

Ivan Richmond and Valerie Voigt, Independent Scholars
“Leading Rituals Over Video Conferencing During the Pandemic”

Gaea McTire, Independent Scholar, “Digital Reciprocity in the Algorithmic Sacred: A Pagan Governance Protocol for Generative AI”

BLACK RELIGION & THEOLOGY

SU 211

Moderator: Aaron Grizzell

Julia Mollenthiel, University of Florida
“Unearthing Afrofuturistic Black Feminist Theology”

Daniel Aryeh, Alpha University College, Ghana
“The Tension between the Printed Bible and the Digital Bible in Religious Practices among African Christians”

Yusuf Yurdigül, Atatürk University
“Representation of ‘Black Religion’ as an Aesthetic of Negation in Digital Video Games”

LeTasha Morrison, Fuller Theological Seminary
“Spirit, Signal and Sankofa: Toward an Afrofuturist Theology of Formation”

Session 3 Continued (3:00 PM – 4:30 PM)

JOINT SESSION—GODDESS STUDIES & DHARMA STUDIES: Dharma and the Goddess: Aesthetics, Practice, and Decolonial Works

SU 213

Athena Lalitā
“Light in the Silenced Dark: A Critique of Even Death Can Be Artistic through the Lens of Goddess Esoteric and Divine Exorcist”

Namitha R. Holla and Prerana Srimal
“Sacred Spectacles as Ritual Technologies: Shakta Representation and Political Sovereignty in the Vijayanagara Empire”

Jingqing Liang
“Between Doctrine and Devotion: Rethinking Buddhist Practice through Upāya”

Matthew
“In Praise of Cadence: Oxventure, Online Communities, and the Return of Fortuna”

Sree Veda Mahanita Kaza
“Threads of Feminine Divine across Hinduism and Zoroastrianism”

Satish Bhatnagar
“A Confluence of Two Faiths”

ISLAMIC STUDIES: Digital Religion, Media, Divine Will, and Muslim Social Worlds

SU 218

Moderator: Souad T. Ali, Arizona State University

Brahim Afrit, Tulane University, Middle East and North Africa Studies Program
“Our Past Is Our Future: National Religion, Social Order, and the Post-9/11 Era in North Africa”

Muntazir Bashir Mir, Indian Institute of Technology Indore, India
“From Streets to Screens: Cyber Perspectives on Shia–Sunni Sectarianism in Kashmir”

Ramazan Akkır, Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University
“Digital Community, Digital Language: New Forms of Religion, Technology, and Innovation in the Hayalhanem Group in Turkey”

Tamer İŞİN, Independent Scholar
“Al-Ghazālī’s Black Swan: Causality, Divine Will, and Epistemic Unpredictability”

All Evening Gatherings Take Place at the Richard Tam Alumni Center

- 4:45 PM – 5:30 PM Reception
- 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM Presidential Address
- 6:30 PM – 6:45 PM Paper Awards
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Black Caucus

Presidential Address

Roberta Sabbath Ph.D. serves as President 2025-2026, American Academy of Religion Western Region AAR-WR and on AAR Comparative Studies in Religion and SBL Biblical Traditions in Islamic Contexts Unit Committees.

Sabbath authored *Sacred Body: Readings in Jewish Literary Illumination* (Lexington Press, Jewish Studies Series 2023), co-edited *Sacred Cultures in Global Politics* (DeGruyter Brill, forthcoming 2026), and edited *Sacred Tropes: Tanakh, New Testament, and Qur'an as Literature and Culture* (Brill Press 2009); *Troubling Topics, Sacred Texts: Readings in Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Qur'an* (De Gruyter Press 2022); and *Vegas Strong: Bearing Witness 1 October 2017* (University of Nevada Press 2023).

Sunday, March 15

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM Session 1

JEWISH STUDIES: Jewish Studies and Technology: Communications Past and Present

SU 205

Moderator: Alex Marcus, University of Alberta, Canada

Cookie Lea Olshein, Congregation Ner Tamid

“The Case of the Disappearing Jewish Books AKA What’s Happening to My Jewish Books? The Evolution and Impact of Technology on Jewish Study and Worship”

Sophia Avants, Fellow at the Albright Institute, and Research Scholar at Hebrew University

“Was There a Correlation Between Water Conservation Efforts and Climate in Late Antique Sepphoris? A Study of Architectural Amendments and Climate Model”

Merve Yetim, Sivas Cumhuriyet University

“Reinterpreting Sabbath in the Digital Age as a Resistance to Technological Acceleration”

Fadime Apaydin, University of California, Riverside

“A Decade of Hate: Comparative Patterns of Anti-Jewish, Anti-Muslim, and Anti-Sikh Hate Crimes in the United States”

RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY UNIT: Technology’s Effect on Religious Conceptualization

SU 207

Nuran Kızmaz Öztürk, Bayburt University

“The Space of Flows and Timeless Time in Digital Religion”

Aliya Mursalova, Azerbaijan Institute of Technology

“Digital pedagogy in religious education: Integrating technology, ethics, and innovations”

Anand Ranjan, The University of Edinburgh

“Reconceptualising Hindu Religiosity: The ‘Appification’ of Deities and Religious Practices in India”

INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS UNIT: Indigenous Spirituality, Belong and Visual Arts

SU 209

Moderator: Lola Mondragón, University of California Santa Barbara

Carmyn Growing Thunder, Independent Scholars, New Mexico

“The Art of Intention: Native Creativity and Technology”

Amaris Aquino, Independent Scholar, New Mexico

“Indigenous Art Forms: Innovation as Tradition”

Izzy Mondragón, Institute of American Indian Arts, New Mexico

“Generational Healing Through Traditional Creative Technologies”

Sol K. Martinez, Institute of American Indian Arts, New Mexico

“The Balance Between Traditional and Modernity as an Urban Indigenous Person”

Session 1 Continued (8:30 AM – 10:00 AM)

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: Profane Technologies: Sacrifice, Translation, and Technological Modernity

SU 211

Moderator: Shakir Stephen

Sara Bacon, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Theology of Technological Civilization”

Natalia Derossi, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Infrastructure and Sacrifice amidst Huastecan Nauhas”

Mitchel E. Hickman, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Telescopic Myopia: Galileo, Benjamin, and Mediatic (In)Visibility”

Andres Niccolo Tiburcio Sesia, University of California, Santa Cruz

“(Under)mining the Sacred: Use, Waste and Value in the Sacrifice Zone”

PSYCHOLOGY, CULTURE & RELIGION: Shaping Faith Narratives: Embodied and Digital Constructions of Community

SU 213

Moderator: Katherine Kunz, Graduate Theological Union

Fadime Apaydin, University of California, Riverside

“Challenging Stereotypes: Counter-Narratives and Identity Formation Among Muslim American Women”

Matthew Switzer, Independent Scholar

“Is the FBI Fake and Gay? Conspiracy Narratives as Digital-Age Religious Practice in the Aftermath of Political Assassination and/or False Flag Attacks”

Hatice Koç Kanca, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University & Wesley Theological Seminary

“The Evolution of Artificial Intelligence and Religious Rituals: A Psychological Evaluation from the Perspective of the Psychology of Religion”

Austin Hussain, Fuller Theological Seminary

“Perpetuating or Correcting? LLMs, White Supremacy, and Race-Related Moral Injury in US Evangelicalism”

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM

Session 2

JEWISH STUDIES: Biblical Text Interpretation

SU 205

Moderator: Roberta Sabbath, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Marika Brussel, Independent, Jewish Community Center London

“Slant of Earth: A Ballet about the biblical triangle of Abraham, Sara, Hagar”

Guillermo M. Jodra, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

“Mystical Poetry and the Translation of the Hebrew Infinitive Absolute”

Karin Hochman, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

“Performing Memory: Trauma, Identity, and Reception in Shohat’s Operatic Adaptation of ‘The Child Dreams’”

Don C. Benjamin, Arizona State University

“The Social World of the Rebekah Cycle”

Session 2 Continued (10:15 AM – 11:45 AM)

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: Navigating Philosophical Innovations Across Traditions

SU 207

Moderator: Mitchel Hickman, University of California, Santa Barbara

Yolande François, Université Jean Moulin Lyon

“The Metaphysical Structure of the Divine and the World in Cordovero’s Kabbalah”

Jacques Parker, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Ghost Communication and Projected Subjectivity”

Shakir Stephen, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Experiments in Preaching: Artificial Intelligence and Authenticity in Evangelical Modernity”

PSYCHOLOGY, CULTURE & RELIGION: The Psychology of Belonging: Symbols, Practices, and the Other

SU 209

Moderator: Casey Crosbie

Katherine Kunz, Graduate Theological Union

“Contested Home: Asylum-seeking in Switzerland and the Politics of Belonging, Place, and Religion”

Eric T. Kalkhurst, Pacifica Graduate Institute

“Orientalism: The Psychology of Repression”

Waldo N. Diaz, California State University Sacramento

“Laughter as Heresy: Semiotics, Religion, and Cultural Resistance from Eco’s The Name of the Rose in Latin American Pop Culture”

RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY UNIT: Abrahamic Faiths and Technology

SU 211

Susan B. Levin, Smith College

“Transhumanism and Christianity: An Irrevocable Incompatibility”

Onur Korkmaz, Temple University

“Prayer Rugs and Rug Pulling: A Look at Islamic Fintech and Meme Coins”

Emine Gümüş Böke, Duzce University

“Artificial Intelligence and Islamic Jurisprudence: The Limits of Digital Ijtihad”

WOMEN’S CAUCUS: Learning Wikipedia Technology for Teaching in the Classroom

SU 213

Co-Chairs: Janice Poss, Claremont Graduate University and Raya Hazini, Graduate Theological Union

Wikipedia Education Representative: Helaine Blumenthal, Senior Program Manager, Wiki Education

Our Wikipedia Session this year will celebrate Wikipedia’s 25th anniversary, 2001-2026. Our special guest from Wikipedia Education, Helaine Blumenthal, give us information on how to teach Wikipedia as a valid teaching tool in any classroom. Wiki Education teaches and supports teachers on how to engage students writing articles, research subjects, and often get their work published. Please join us.

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM AARWR Business Meeting
SU 205

The Business Meeting is open to ALL AAR Members. Lunch is provided.

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM Session 3

JEWISH STUDIES: A Roundtable: Technology Creates International Community

SU 205

Moderator: Steven Phillips, Executive Director, Jewish ERGs, London, United Kingdom

Panelists:

Alejandra Dashe, Instructional Designer, Arizona State University

Alison Black, University of California, San Diego

José Melendrez, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty and

Community Initiatives, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Alex Marcus, University of Alberta, Canada

RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY UNIT: Ethics, Technology, and Religion

SU 207

Chang In Sohn, Graduate Theological Union

“Re-thinking Evil in the Anthropocene”

Mahbubeh Kuhestani, Arizona State University

“Digital Faith and Digital Harm: Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence among Iranian Muslim Immigrant Women in the United States”

Braden Molheok, Graduate Theological Union

“The Reciprocity of Infused and Acquired Virtue Between Humans and Technology”

ECOLOGY AND RELIGION: Ecology and Religion Through Organizations and Institutions

SU 209

Ahmed Naji Saleha

“Ibrahim and the Iron Axe: Monotheism, Myth, and Climate Collapse in the Age of Armageddon”

Matt Switzer

“Save our Souls’: A Case Study for Comprehensive Analysis of the Spiritual Costs of Extractivism in the University and field of Ecology and Religion”

Tamim Raihan

“Formalizing Faith-Based Sustainability: Religious NGOs and the Ecology of Ramadan”

Avalon Jade Theisen

“Plant Restoration Through A Buddhist Lens: The Nonprofit Organization Earth Sangha”

Session 3 Continued (1:45 PM – 3:15 PM)

BLACK CAUCUS BUSINESS MEETING

SU 211

QUEER CAUCUS BUSINESS MEETING

SU 213

**WOMEN'S CAUCUS ROUNDTABLE & BUSINESS MEETING:
Feminist Perspectives on Trauma and Healing in Non-
Traditional Faith-based Spiritualities**

SU 218

Moderator: Janice L. Poss, Claremont Graduate University

Please join us for lively discussion on how non-mainstream organized religions are impacted in life & the academy. How does society understand non-traditional religions in American & other countries? What are the positives & negatives of how non-traditional religions are received in the academy? Come learn new insights about religion, it's beliefs, rituals, & practices. The following topics around trauma & healing to be discussed: Intersectionality & Identity: Womanist, mujerista, & first nations-specific feminist theologies, Indigenous women's spirituality, decolonialism, & transnationalism, Where does Race, class, sexuality, & disability enter into trauma & healing? Digital Age & New Expressions: Role of Social media in retraumatization & shame, Online religious communities & gender identity, Digital storytelling & women's religious experiences about trauma & healing, Technology, embodiment, & spiritual practice. Contemporary Challenges & Movements: #MeToo & religious institutions (Virtus Training) addressing accountability, healing, & reform, Feminist responses to religious fundamentalism and authoritarianism as they relate to trauma, Reproductive justice & religious liberty debates around trauma & healing, LGBTQ+ inclusion & exclusion in view of a pastoral feminist theology of care. All religious traditions are welcome.

Panelists:

Delores (Lola) Mondragon, University of California, Santa Barbara
Meera (Kali) Tanikella, Graduate Theological Union
Raya Hazini, GTU, Graduate Theological Union

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM Session 4

JEWISH STUDIES: "Voices of Valor!"

SU 219

Moderator: Joanne Bilbert, Independent Scholar and Author

"VOICES OF VALOR! A Student-Centered Holocaust Education Play in Monologues"— Featuring the true stories of young Polish Jewish female anti-Nazi Resisters.

Panelists include actors in the play and Joanne Gilbert.

Session 4 Continued (3:30 PM – 5:00 PM)

BLACK RELIGION & THEOLOGY UNIT

SU 205

Moderator: Aaron Grizzell

Carolynne Brown Hitter, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
"Black Music Performance as Innovation and Scholarship: The Jeter Family Musicians and Their Role as Social Activists"

Asad El Malik, University of Witwatersrand
"Theology of Inferiority"

Jerry M. Grimes, University of North Carolina
"Dispersed Between Illinois and Colorado, Delivered Between Israel and Vegas"

Robert Wiseman, Pacific School of Religion
"Well Washed: A Washhouse Theology of Black Faith, Suffering, and Liberation"

RELIGION AND THE ARTS

Remote Session

Mohammed Musthafa KP, University of Calicut
"Screening Faith: Religious Authentication, Media Technologies, and the Politics of Halal Cinema in Contemporary Kerala, South India"

Antonio Fuccillo, University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli; Ludovica Decimo, University of Sassari; Miriam Abu Salem, University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli
"Cinema as a Bridge for Interreligious Dialogue"

Anna Hennessey, Graduate Theological Union
"AI Technology and Visualizing the Womb in Birth as a Contemporary Rite of Passage"