

Western Region

California
Pacific Islands
Nevada

Hawaii
Guam
Arizona

Civil Rights, Religion & Responsibility

**What is the role religion plays in
civil rights discourse in 2023 & beyond?**

Welcome

Welcome to the annual conference for the American Academy of Religion Western Region at UC Davis! We're excited for our first in-person conference since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic. I want to give a big thank you for the staff and educators at UC Davis for extending an incredible welcome to our conference and for going above and beyond in responding to all of our needs, requests, and questions—especially to Dr. Archana Venkatesan, Mary Carrillo, Sonya Jackson and the student staff helping through this weekend.

While this will be the second conference that I have managed for the Region, this will be first with a dual component of in-person and online participation. For any gaps or hiccups we encounter in the process, I'm here on hand to work us through it, and I appreciate your patience and flexibility as we grow into this new way of conferencing. Unit chairs and Moderators will have my cell phone number; you can call or text me at any time during the conference.

The week of the conference, a separate email to all moderators and chairs will be sent with zoom room information for the panels, and those that have registered for the event will also get that same listing.

Cheers to a wonderful weekend!

Sincerely,
Jacob Perez, MTS (he/his)

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Civil Rights, Religion & Responsibility

What is the role religion plays in civil rights discourse in 2023 and beyond?

AS WE GATHER this year, I want us to reflect on the conference theme (reproduced below) that I wrote and we all considered last year in preparation for this year's conference. It is vital for us, as scholars and researchers of religion to understand that we understand that the situations that I wrote about last spring have significantly changed—and not in a good way. We have witnessed mass shootings—at Club Q in Colorado Springs in November, CO targeting the LGBTQ+ community, in Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay here in California on the West Coast just this month, as I write this in January 2023, targeting the Asian community. We have increased shootings of Black Americans. Roe v. Wade was not simply threatened, as we learned in the leak last spring, but federal protection was dissolved and currently Congress has bills circulating to ban abortion at the federal level with significant states already having done so as soon as federal protection was removed. We are no closer to restoring the Voting Rights Act and in fact, voting officials in charge of elections have had their lives threatened if they are not willing to be “election deniers.” The LGBTQ+ community is on Homeland Security’s list of those communities directly being targeted by domestic terrorism.



Marie Cartier is a teacher, poet, writer, healer, artist, and scholar. She holds a BA in Communications from the University of New Hampshire; an MA in English/Poetry from Colorado State University; an MFA in Theatre Arts (Playwriting) from UCLA; an MFA in Film and TV (Screenwriting) from UCLA; an MFA in Visual Art (Painting/Sculpture) from Claremont Graduate University; and a Ph.D. in Religion with an emphasis on Women and Religion from Claremont Graduate University.

Photo: Kimberly Esslinger

The biggest danger to our American soil is from within.

My biggest hope for this conference is that we leave UC Davis with a sense of what we can do—and not be without hope. It is essential that we answer the questions—what does religious discourse play in terms of where we stand in the Academy—with our values of inclusion, respect for diversity, compassion and connection? Religion has been used repeatedly as a justification for violence against many communities, and certainly and repeatedly against the LGBTQ+ community. How do we gain “real estate” within religious discourse to command a religious imperative towards “love one another”—rather than hate/sin?

This is a crucial time in American history. Where do we stand?

This the question of our conference.

These are the questions I asked us to consider in our conference this year. What follows is a partial list of those questions, for the full list see the original theme:

Civil Rights, Religion & Responsibility

What is the role religion plays in civil rights discourse in 2023 and beyond?

What are the civil rights that marginalized communities have come to depend on? What about the rights of women, and their right to choose? Free and fair elections? Voter's rights? Immigration rights? Gay marriage? LGBTQ+ job rights? Sexual harassment laws? Are these rights ones we can depend on? What place does religion hold in the discourse surrounding these rights? What are rights that are "settled law?" What do we advocate as the role religion plays in shaping these discussions? Should religion be part of this discussion—or not?

...How central are these questions to religious discourse? What will we try to influence/not influence as religious scholars? And finally- what is the world that we are helping to create? What is the table we are setting? Religion plays a major part in contemporary US discourse—should it? Whether we like it or not, as religious scholars, our thoughts, actions, words and deeds play a part in the political discourse of our time. How do we hope to frame this discussion as we move forward?

I believe we have compiled an incredible series of sessions to help us begin to grapple with possible answers. It is my hope, and the hope of all the organizers for this weekend, that you find the hope to go forward with courage and compassion following this conference to implement what we all create together as we posit these questions in the varied ways we, as religious scholars, will do, through research, discussion and conversation in person.

Yours in the struggle,

Marie Cartier, Ph.D.
Vice President & Program Chair, AARWR

Where to Check-in?

For your name badge, map, and program...

The next page displays a campus map, and the circled buildings are where the conference panels and meetings will be held. Saturday Check-in will be on the second floor of the Student Community Center, just outside the Multi-Purpose Room where the Keynote and Reception will be held. On Sunday, Check-in will be in Room 18 of the Davis Language Center in Olson Hall. Check-ins for both days begin at 8am.



The Student Community Center is where Saturday Check-in occurs, as well as the Keynote, Awards, Evening Reception, and Presidential Address.

The Memorial Union is where the majority of meetings and caucuses are held, including the Queer Caucus, Board Meeting, and Business Meeting.

Panels are usually held in Olson Hall, including:

Davis Language Center Rooms (DLC):

DLC-18 (Sunday Registration) DLC-18A DLC 53A DLC 57

Olson Hall

Olson-163 Olson-125 Olson-141 Olson-167

WI-FI? YES! Wi-fi is available for attendees and presenters, and detailed information for that will be sent to registered participants the week of the conference.

Friday, March 24

Pre-Conference

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Women's Caucus
Memorial Union - De Carli Room, 2nd Floor

AARWR Women in Religion Wiki Project Edit-a-thon

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 Western Region Theme, Civil Rights, Religion & Responsibility. At this workshop, which is being held during the 2023 AARWR annual meeting on Pre-conference Friday, March 24, 2023 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., participants will sign up as wiki-editors, create their personal user page, learn the basics of editing, make Wiki stubs, and make their first wiki-edits. We will talk about using Wikipedia in the Classroom. If you have time before the conference, sign up for a Wikipedia account here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Create Account](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Create_Account) (Consider concerns about anonymity when choosing a "username.") Take a quick look at our work list and tasks for the Women in Religion Project (formerly the 1000 Women in Religion Project) here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_1000_Women_in_Religion 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 time for hands-on assistance. No need to be a technological expert! All are welcome!

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. AARWR Board Meeting
Memorial Union - Fielder Room, 2nd Floor

7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Queer View Event
Memorial Union - De Carli Room, 2nd Floor

The Queer Community as Domestic Terrorism Targets: Why Drag Shows are Being Banned and Much More

Come join the Queer Caucus in our Annual Pre-Conference event where we will be screening episode "Florida Part One" from the HBO hit reality series "We're Here". After the screening we will host a round table discussion about the rise in hate crimes, domestic terrorism, anti-trans/anti-queer government policies, and the rise in targeting and banning drag shows. Alongside our crucial and vital exploration of the extremely concerning and dangerous landscape we are living in, we will also be hosting a space for fellowship, community, and networking. The likes of which haven't been seen in over 3 years due to the global pandemic. All are welcome.

Saturday, March 25

First Session (8:30 - 10:00 a.m.)

Women and Religion

OLSON 163

A Tribute to Rosemary Radford Ruether

Moderator: Emily Silverman

Panelists:

Ellen Garner Steinke, Fuller Theological Seminary, "The Influence of Predominant Christian Atonement theology on Initiation and Perpetuation of Intimate Partner Violence."

James Garrison, Baldwin Wallace University, "Black Bodies That Matter: Black Girl Magical Realism."

Sarah Robinson and Theresa Yugar, Pacific Lutheran University and California State University, Los Angeles, respectively, "From the Editor's Desk to the Classroom: *Valuing Lives and Healing Earth* Amplifying Global Voices, Facilitating Scholarly Solidarity, and Fostering Student Engagement."

Islamic Studies

OLSON 125

The Prophet Muhammad and Human/Civil Rights; Jerusalem; and Muslim American Civil Rights in a Christian Nation

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

Panelists:

Nosizwe Breaux-Abdur-Rahman, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, "The Life of the Prophet Muhammad as a Model for the Role of Religion in Contemporary Civil and Human Rights Discourses."

Faisal Azar, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, "Prophet Muhammad's Madina Pact as a Civil Right Document."

Danya Mohammad, University of California, Riverside, "Salah al-Din Al-Ayyubi: Reviving Islamic Jerusalem."

Vincent F. Biondo, III, Cal Poly Humboldt, CA, "American Muslim Civil Rights in a Christian Nation."

Lauren R. Eastland, University of California, Davis
Homeschooling for Pluralism or Nationalism? Differing Ideals for Muslims and Conservative Christians

Religions of Asia

OLSON 141

Engaging and Transforming the World

Moderator: Adam Tyson, Ph.D. Student, UC Riverside

Panelists:

Veena Howard, Cal State University, Fresno, "Satyagraha and Love-force: Exploring the Liberating Power of Religion"

Cogen Bohanec, Arihanta Academy, "An Argument for Socially Engaged Jainism"

Nancy Martin, Chapman University, "Performing Bhakti: Forging Solidarities, Speaking Truth to Power"

Psychology, Culture, and Religion

OLSON 167

Encountering the Other – Interactions across Racial, National, Religious, and Mental Divides

Moderators: Kevin Whitesides, University of California, Santa Barbara & Casey Cosbie, Scripps College

Panelists:

Fatima Khattab, Independent Scholar*
"Addressing Mental Illnesses and Rehabilitation in Muslim Societies" – Attending Virtually

Katherine Kunz, Center for Religion and Cities
"How We (Don't) Listen to Asylum-Seekers"

Eric DaCosta, Occidental College
"Sectarianism inside and outside of the Stadium: The Old Firm as a Reflection of Catholic-Protestant Divide in Scottish Society"

Chang In Sohn, Graduate Theological Union
"In Between the Oppressor and the Oppressed: The Confucian Virtue of Rin as a Response to Racism"

Womanist

DLC - 57

Moderator: Valerie Miles-Tribble

Panelists:

Marilyn A. Batchelor, Claremont Graduate University, "Pauli Murray—Womanist and Crusader in the Black Social Gospel—Then and Now?"

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

Saturday, March 25

Keynote (10:15 - 11:00 a.m.)

Irene Joe, UC Davis

Student Community Center - Multi-Purpose Room, 2nd Floor
While this keynote will be recorded, it will not be livestreamed. It will be uploaded to the AARWR website shortly after the conference.

Title: *Mercy's Workers: The Catholic Church and Indigent Defense*

Abstract: This talk will discuss how the Catholic Church can best support and advance the work of public defenders during this moment of interest in reforming the domestic criminal process.

Bio: Professor Irene Joe degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and Stanford University School of Law. Her research interests are focused on the public defender institution and its ability to comply with the ethical and constitutional rules imposed upon it. She teaches classes on Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Professional Responsibility, and Voir Dire (Jury Selection). Her research has appeared or is forthcoming in the Iowa Law Review, the California Law Review, the UC Davis Law Review, the Boston University Law Review, the Denver Law Review, and the Washington and Lee Law Review. Professor Joe also published an op-ed during the 2016 presidential election cycle titled, "Like Many Immigrants, I Owe a Debt to the Republican Party... of the 1980s" in the Los Angeles Times. She is co-editing a forthcoming book on the Catholic Church and Criminal Justice Reform which will include essays written by pre-eminent legal scholars around the nation.



Prior to joining the UC Davis faculty, Professor Joe served as a fellow for the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama where she represented indigent defendants in capital post-conviction litigation and children sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. She then completed a federal clerkship with the Honorable Napoleon Jones of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California before returning to practicing criminal law. Professor Joe was both a line defender and the Assistant Special Litigation Counsel at the Orleans Public Defenders, a public defender office newly created in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. She was also the Assistant Training Director with the Louisiana Public Defender Board where she was responsible for creating and implementing statewide training programs for the public defenders, investigators, mitigation specialists and administrative staff tasked with providing constitutional and ethical representation to defendants facing misdemeanor, felony and capital charges. Professor Joe transitioned to legal academia as a Binder Teaching Fellow at UCLA School of Law before assuming her position at UC Davis School of Law.

Saturday, March 25

Second Session (11:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.)

Philosophy of Religion

OLSON 125

Non-Western Philosophies of "Religion"

Moderator: Dane Sawyer

Panelists:

Dilsa Deniz, PhD, Harvard Divinity School, "Shâmaran, the Mother Earth of the Kurds: The Philosophy of Love, Duality, Eternity"

Lerato Pitso, Drew Theological School, "Process Theology Meets Ubuntu!"

Dane Sawyer, PhD, University of La Verne, "Anatta and Consciousness: Conventional and Ultimate Notions of Selfhood in Buddhism and Sartre"

Pagan Studies

OLSON 141

Visions of Inspiration and Creativity

Moderator: Jeffrey Albaugh

Panelists:

Jeffrey Albaugh, "The Act of Becoming a Witch *IS* an Act of Rebellion"

Logan Greene, Ph.D., "The Antibody of All Time": Rebellion, Revolution, Resistance"

Dorothea Viale, Ph.D., "Dance Dramas as an Instrument of Political Change"

JOINT SESSION: WOMEN AND RELIGION AND INDIGENOUS TRADITIONS UNITS

OLSON 167

WOMEN AND JUSTICE IN ASIAN AMERICAN, CATALAN, INDIGENOUS, AND DHARMIC TRADITIONS

Moderator: Emily Silverman, Graduate Theological Union

Panelists:

Thien-Huong Ninh, UC Berkeley, and Pete Villarreal, Independent Scholar

"Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of Lavang in Silicon Valley: Community Formation and Social Justice"

Kali (Meera) Tanikella, Graduate Theological Union
"Emotion, Rasa and the Divine Feminine: the Evolution and Teleology of Western and Eastern Science of Emotionality and Creativity"

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

"Renewal from Regression: Re-remembering Indigenous Ceremonial Protocols and Purpose"

Anna Hennessey, Graduate Theological Union
"Memory, Time and Resistance in the Catalan Art of Eugènia Balcells and Mari Chordà"

Graduate Student Professional Development Roundtable

OLSON 163

Reflections on the University of California (UC) Strike

Panelists:

Dr. Jess Rheman
Lecturer

Stephanie Milton

Ph.D. Student and Associate Instructor
UC Davis

Alba Rodriguez

Ph.D. Student
UC Riverside

Samantha L C Kang

Ph.D. Candidate
UC Santa Barbara

Kimberly Diaz

Ph.D. Candidate
UC Riverside

Saturday, March 25

Second Session (11:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.)

Buddhist Studies

DLC - 57

Textual Interpretations and Re-Interpretations

Moderator: Alina Pokhrel, University of Virginia

Panelists:

Vaishali Gaidhani, University of the West, "Interpretations of the Narratives of Buddha Sakyamuni and his Disciples: the Noble Eight-fold Path and Social Responsibility in the Pali Canonical Texts"

Sirinanda Unaleeye, University of the West, "Buddhist notion of 'Nobility': Factors for Being a Noble or an Ignoble One"

Athena Lalitā, Graduate Theological Union, "The Phenomenology of Demonic Illnesses and Healing Practices: Perspectives from Hindu Vedic and Indian Buddhist Philosophy"

Ecology and Religion

DLC - 18

Religion, Spirituality, and the Rights of Nature

Moderator: Jessica Beaudette

Panelists:

Missy Lahren, California Institute of Integral Studies, "Update on the Rights of Nature Movement"

Jessica Beaudette, Arizona State University, "Philosophy of Mind and Ecology: The Nature of Consciousness and the Rights of Nature"

Maha Abdelwahab, University of Houston, "The Grasses: Spiritual Activism Through Poetic Embodiment"

Aron Tillema, University of California Davis, "Non-Human Entities in the Book of Jonah: Divine Care and Prophetic Callousness?"

Lunch (1:00 - 2:00 p.m.)

- Unit Chairs Meeting & Lunch

Student Communion Center - Multi-Purpose Room, 2nd Floor

Lunch Provided for Unit Chairs

- Queer Caucus Lunch

Memorial Union - Fielder Room, 2nd Floor

Lunch Provided

Saturday, March 25

Third Session (2:15 - 3:45 p.m.)

Christianity

OLSON 125

Justice and the World

Moderator: Dyron Daugherty, Pepperdine University

Panelists:

Dylan Parker, doctoral student, Fuller Theological Seminary, "Public Ecclesiology for Civil Discourse in United States Evangelicalism"

Woo Joong Kang, doctoral student, Claremont Graduate University, "Responsibility of Asian American Christian Ethics: Liminality to Solidarity"

Gerard A. Jameson, doctoral student, Temple University, "Black Catholic and Methodist Liturgical Reasoning: An Ecumenical Approach Toward Christian Unity Through Worship and Music"

Catholic Studies

OLSON 141

Catholicism in Thought, Word, and Deed

Moderator: Samantha Kang, University of California, Santa Barbara

Panelists:

Jennifer Sherrill, UC Davis (Ph.D. Student), "Sounding Faith: Constraining Refugee Voices in the Catholic Church of Lesbos"

Jeanie Hayes, Fuller Theological Seminary (Ph.d Candidate), "Inter-religious Dialogue on Compassion, Belief, and Practices among Catholic Monastics (Benedictine) and Buddhist Monastics"

Thomas Davis, California State University, San Bernardino (Professor of Social Work), "The Catholic Psychoanalytic Theology of Contemplation and Action in Civil Rights Discourses"

Latinx Spiritualities & Religions Panel

DLC - 57

Moderator: Marlene Ferraras & Jacob Perez

Panelists:

Eric Issac, Florida International, "Towards a Non-Eurocentric Definition of Spiritual Abuse"

David Flores, Sacramento State, "An Unlikely Host: The role of Father John Luce and the Church of the Epiphany to the Chicana/o Movement"

Ethics

OLSON 163

Civil Rights, Religion and Responsibility: Ethical Frameworks for Justice

Moderator: Mahjabeen Dhala, Ph.D. and Sheryl Johnson, Ph.D.

Panelists:

Raya M. Hazini, M.A. Student, Graduate Theological Union, "Gender Equity from A Bahá'í Perspective"

Ryan Quandt, "An adjusting letter: The pragmatics of scripture (Bereshit Rabbah, I.10)"

Nikia Smith Robert, Ph.D. Fred and Dorothy Chau-Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Pomona College, "A Theological Ethic of Abolition."

Goddess Studies

DLC - 18

Goddesses, Translation, and Scripture in Hindu and Sikh Traditions

Moderator: Angela Dane, Meridian University

Panelists:

Anuj Vaidya, University of California, Davis, "The Larval Goddess: Sita as Method in Forest Tales"

Pawan Rehill, University of California, Santa Barbara, "Goddess(es) in Sikh Scripture: Some Issues in Translation"

Tarnjit Kaur Johal, Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique (INRS), "Introducing Mai Bhago to Goddess Studies"

Disability Studies

OLSON 167

"Crip Camp" and Round Table Discussion

Moderators: Anjeanette LeBoeuf (Saint Louis University) and Elizabeth Staszak (Independent Scholar)

Come join us for a gripping and fruitful endeavoring. We will be viewing a portion of the documentary "Crip Camp" before leading into a discussion on what was being presented, the positive and harmful effects this film has, and what it means for Disability Studies and the communities it represents.

Saturday, March 25

Fourth Session (4:00 - 5:30 p.m.)

Asian American Studies

OLSON 163

Religion's Role in Forging Asian American Solidarities in the Past and the Present

Moderator: Shannon Toribio and Laura Snell, UC Santa Barbara

Panelists:

Kaiqi Hua, J.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor, California State University–Monterey Bay, “United Buddhist Liturgy for Asian American Disaster Relief”

Annie Li, MPhil Student, University of Oxford, “San Francisco Chinatown to the American South: Chinese American Christians in the Civil Rights Movement, 1963-1966”

Islamic Studies

OLSON 125

Women's Human/Social Rights in Religion; Muslim / LDS Women (compare/contrast); And Differing Ideals for Muslims and Conservative Christians.

Moderator: Dr. Sophia Pandya

Panelists:

Zeinab Vessal, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, “Women's Social Rights, Religion, and Responsibilities”

Woo Joong Kang, doctoral student, Claremont Graduate University, “Responsibility of Asian American Christian Ethics: Liminality to Solidarity”

Gerard A. Jameson, doctoral student, Temple University, “Black Catholic and Methodist Liturgical Reasoning: An Ecumenical Approach Toward Christian Unity Through Worship and Music”

Philosophy of Religion

OLSON 141

Jankélévitch, Rites of Smoking, and Narratology

Moderator: Dane Sawyer

Panelists:

Samantha L C Kang, University of California, Santa Barbara, “Vladimir Jankélévitch: Philosopher for the 21st Century”

Nathalia Bell, Graduate Theological Union, “Zigarettes: The Rites of Smoking”

Nathan Fredrickson, University of California Santa Barbara, “Philosophy of Kaiology: The Philosophical Study of Fictional Worldviews”

Buddhist Studies

VIRTUAL

Buddhism and Community

Moderator: Alina Pokhrel, University of Virginia

Panelists:

Galen Gorelangton, University of Nevada, Reno, “Buddhist Pure Lands and Zones of Social Abandonment: Amitabha's Sukhavati as Blueprint for Spatial Resistance”

Sopheha Seng, California State University, “Gender, War, and Buddhism: An Intimate Ethnography of My Mother”

Adrian Villasenar-Galarza, California Institute of Integral Studies, “Earth's Dharma: Joanna Macy's Engaged Buddhism in Latin America.

Christianity

OLSON 167

Justice, Politics, and Economy

Moderator: Enrico Beltramini (Notre Dame de Namur University)

Panelists:

Taylor Terzek, doctoral student, Northern Seminary, The Supraimperial Political Theology of Paul

Tyler Womack, doctoral student, Southern Methodist University, Having Something to Say: A Theological Reflection on Language and Rights in a Monetary Economy

Saturday, March 25

Evening Session

Student Community Center - Multi-purpose Room, 2nd Floor

While these presentations will be recorded, they will not be livestreamed. They will be uploaded to the AARWR website after the conference.

5:45 - 6:45 p.m.

Reception & Paper Award Presentation

7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Presidential Address, John M. Erickson, Ph.D.

John M Erickson, Ph.D.

Tales from the Other Side: Academy, Activism, and Religious Studies

Mayor Pro Tempore Erickson first planted roots in West Hollywood in 2010 when he was selected to intern for the West Hollywood City Council. The internship set him on a path that connected his work for social and economic justice with his passion for public service. He went on to become Council Deputy to former Mayor Abbe Land and then served as a staff member at West Hollywood City Hall working to advance policies, initiate programs, and increase awareness around LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, the environment, and civic engagement.

After leaving City Hall, Mayor Pro Tempore Erickson served as a Legislative Representative at LAX (Los Angeles International Airport) and is currently the Interim Vice President of Public Affairs, Communications, and Marketing at Planned Parenthood Los Angeles.

The immediate past Vice Chair of the City's Planning Commission, Councilmember Erickson's priorities on the City Council include: overcoming COVID-19 through sensible health practices and economic recovery; creating more affordable housing and protecting renters' rights; reducing traffic through alternative transportation strategies, fighting climate change and making our city more sustainable; and implementing policies that make the city truly free of prejudice and welcoming to all.

Mayor Pro Tempore Erickson has earned a reputation as a fearless, tenacious, and effective voice for those who need one. His advocacy work includes serving as a National Board member of the National Organization for Women and President of the ACLU Southern California. In 2017, he became Governor Brown's appointee to the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and served as an organizer for both the Resist March and the historic Women's March Los Angeles. He serves on the Board of the Women's March Los Angeles Foundation. Councilmember Erickson was part of the End Statute of Limitation on Rape (ERSOL) Campaign, which overturned California's statute of limitations on rape and sexual assault in 2016. He is currently the President of the American Academy of Religion's Western Region and Co-Chair of the Queer Studies in Religion Unit.

Mayor Pro Tempore Erickson received his Ph.D. in American Religious History from Claremont Graduate University and a Dual-Master's Degree from Claremont Graduate University. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh with a B.A. in English and Women's Studies.



Mayor Pro Tempore John M. Erickson was elected to the West Hollywood City Council on November 3, 2020 with the commitment to uphold the city's founding vision for a forward-thinking, diverse, and tolerant community.

Sunday, March 26

Morning Session (8:00 - 9:00 a.m.)

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.
OLSON 167

Women's Caucus
Reviving Women Church: Empowering Women in Religious Leadership within Existing Religious structures

Women-Church amplifies diverse feminist, faith-filled voices by providing a space for women to share and practice ritual. Started by early feminists who saw a need to build and make their own liturgical voices heard louder, Women Church and Women Church Convergence were created to provide a space for women to build their own meaningful rituals, theological practices and faith discussions apart from male hierarchical religious structures.

This session will introduce some of those, but also open the discussion as to the viability of continuing women-only led religious structures that open up possibilities for women, especially from the Roman Catholic perspective of Pope Francis' Synodal 2021-24 that envisions "enlarging the the space of the tent." (Is 54:2) The discussions will be consider how to "enlarge the space of existing tents" in current religious structures to further involve women and other excluded groups to stand on equal footing with cis-male-dominant structures that are still so powerful. What does this mean not only for women, but for other excluded groups?

First Session (9:15 - 10:45 a.m.)

Jewish Studies

OLSON 163

Culture in Motion: Activism and Advocacy

Moderator: Alexander Marcus, Yale University

Panelists:

Elazar Ben-Lulu, lecturer (assistant professor), Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ariel University, Israel
"The American Reform Jewish Response to HIV/AIDS"

Tzachi Cohen, Department of Jewish Studies, Ono Academic College, Israel

"Rights and duties in the Jewish tradition - leadership fights for the rights of the underprivileged during a crisis (Mishna Excisions (Kritut) 1, 7)"

Ariel Evan Mayse, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Stanford University

"Rights, Obligations, and Jewish Environmental Thinking"

Coffee and Business Card Exchange

DLC - 18A

Facilitator: John M. Erickson, President, AARWR

Grab a cup of coffee and join John M. Erickson, AARWR's President, for a business card exchange! This is a fun networking opportunity during which we will swap research backgrounds and contact information. Scholars and students will have the possibility of meeting others in their fields or who share similar interests. We look forward to seeing you!

Ecology and Religion

OLSON 141

Religion, Spirituality, and the Rights of Nature

Moderator: Jessica Beaudette

Panelists:

Dr. Dilsa Deniz, Harvard Divinity School, "Tracing the Mother Earth's footprints: Eco philosophy, femininity and Kurdish Alevi myth of Gola Bûyêr"

Nathalia Bell, Graduate Theological Union, "Ziggyettes: The Rites of Smoking"

Julie Bongers, University of California Santa Barbara, "Singing Relationships with Waters and Lands Awake"

Dr. Laura Michetti, California Institute of Integral Studies, "Lighting the Future in the Shadow of the Past: Hydropower in Sápmi"

Exploratory Session for Interest in Pentecostal Studies

DLC - 53A

Moderator: Jacob Perez, MTS

This informal exploratory session is meant to gauge interest amongst any students and scholars in the AARWR for the possible formation of a Pentecostal Studies unit. Come and share research interests, favorite readings, and anything else you might want to share with fellow researchers in the field. All ranges of work within Pentecostal Studies are welcome, including: historical, theological, queer theory, sociological, etc.

Sunday, March 26

Second Session (11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)

Queer Studies in Religion

OLSON 167

Queer Community in the Streets: Beyond Bars, Religion, and Sacred Spaces

Moderator: John M. Erickson, Ph.D. and Marie Cartier, Ph.D.

Join Queer Studies in Religion Co-Chairs Marie Cartier, Ph.D., and John M. Erickson, Ph.D. for a discussion about the role of queer studies in religion and its historical significance of bar culture and moving beyond these sacred spaces and recapturing activism and academia through religion and activism.

Sikh Studies

DLC - 57

Understanding Sikh Environmental Activism Through Eco-Sikh

Moderator: Nirinjan Khalsa

Panelists:

Avalon Jade Theisen, Ph.D. Student, Arizona State University,

Dr. Rajwant Singh, President, Eco-Sikh

Religion and the Social Sciences

OLSON 141

Moderator: Meg Tiller

Panelists:

Nikia S. Robert, PhD, Pomona College, "A Theological Ethic of Abolition"

Hasan Mahmud, PhD, Northwestern University in Qatar, "Religion and Collective Identity: Islam and Racialized National Identity Politics in a Muslim-Majority Country"

Kelsey Cooper, UC Santa Barbara, "Transnational Bodies: Confronting Heterosexism in Afro-Atlantic Religious Communities."

Stephanie Milton, PhD Student, University of California, Davis, "The Role of Faith for Black Patients and Caregivers Contemplating Advanced Care Planning"

Jewish Studies Session

OLSON 163

Conflict & Resolution

Moderator:

Roberta Sabbath, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Eyal Davidson, Herzog College, Israel, "Kosher coffee? Attitudes of 16th century Eretz Israel sages towards the relationships between Jews and Muslims"

Morey Lipsett, Ph.D. Student, Graduate Theological Union, "And Voting Booths": Subverting the American Apocalypse with Tony Kushner"

Irit Offer Stark, Research Fellow, Kogod Research Center for Contemporary Jewish Thought, Shalom Hartman Institute and teaching fellow, School of Basic Jewish Studies, Bar Ilan University, Israel, "The right to parenthood in an era of assisted reproductive technologies: Ethical and halachic considerations to deal with the case of accidental embryo mix-up in an IVF procedure"

Pan-African

OLSON 125

Moderator: Sakena Young-Scaggs

Daniela B. Abraham, Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, "Love in Action: Arturo (Arthur) Schomburg's Notion of Collaboration and Service"

Rita de Cássia Hipólito, Vanderbilt University, "Criminalization of Black Values in Brazil"

Buddhist Studies

VIRTUAL

Open Forum Discussion: "Problems in the Study of Buddhism"

Moderator: Alina Pokhrel, University of Virginia

Sunday, March 26

Lunch (12:30 - 2:00 p.m.)

12:45 - 2:00 p.m.

Business Meeting

All members of the AARWR are welcome to attend
Memorial Union - Fielder Room, 2nd Floor
Lunch is not provided.

Third Session (2:15 - 3:45 p.m.)

Religion, Literature, and Film

OLSON 141

Civil Rights & Religion through the Lens of the Arts

Moderator: Chantal Noa Forbes

Panelists:

Olufemi Gonsalves, Fuller Theological Seminary, "Damsels Versus Witches and the Battle for Women's Identities in Narratives of Spiritism: A Comparative Exploration of Female Characters in the Film 'Master' and the Story of Rapunzel"

Maha Abdelwahab, University of Houston, Sexual Desire as Thanatos in the Postcolonial Female Subject

Jewish Feminist Studies

DLC 57

Self and Outside Perceptions of Jewish Women Identities/Non-Identities

Presenter:

Iliana Maymind, PhD, Chapman University, "Commonalities And/Or Differences: Edith Stein, Regina Jonas, Rosa Luxemburg"

Respondents:

Kohenet, Dr Emily Leah Silverman, Graduate Theological Union

Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Seidel, University of Oregon / Aquarian Minyan

Disability Studies

OLSON 163

Bridging Pedagogy and Praxis in Disability Studies

Moderator: Anjeanette LeBoeuf, Saint Louis University

Panelists:

Rachel Neubuhr Torres (Arizona State) - "No Hate Like Christian Love: A Political Theology of Disability (In) Justice"

Elizabeth Staszak (Independent Scholar) - "No Know-How? Responding to the Demand for Inclusive Pedagogy within Systemically Ableist Schools"

Goddess Studies

OLSON 125

Mothers, Mermaids and Music in the Field of Goddess Studies

Moderator: Anna Hennessey, Graduate Theological Union

Alaya Dannu, Fielding Graduate University, "What is a Mother Goddess Tradition?"

Jeannette Kiel, California State University, Stanislaus, "Mermaids Exist: A Mestiza Ecofeminist-Spiritual Examination of Segregation and Racism"

Angela Dane, Meridian University, "When Women Were Drummers: Reclaiming the Rhythm of the Goddess"

Black Caucus Session & Mixer

OLSON 167

Save the Date

March 15th-17th, 2024



Western Region

