

Francis Youth Institute Reflection

by Christian Gregory Astran '20, MA Theology
and Leadership Program

The Francis Youth Institute presents a fascinating opportunity that challenges the attending faculty, graduate students, peer mentors, and high school students to expand their horizons as they journey together into an outdoor adventure of theological inquiry. The challenge of the encounter lies in the exposure to natural beauty that students are allowed to experience as they explore the wilderness of the greater Spokane area. Being able to witness this sacred encounter that occurs within the students, and all attendees of the Francis Youth Institute for that matter, reminds me of a quote from St. Augustine of Hippo, "To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek him the greatest adventure; to find him, the greatest human achievement."

The romance of the encounter of the Francis Youth Institute lies in the personal relationships that are formed between all of the participants of the Institute. The highlight for myself and so many other participants is the joy we experience as we watch students, and indeed ourselves, grow closer in relationships both old and new. This aspect of relationship at FYI allows for the beginning of a romance of encounter with God, as all participants interact with people that they never would meet in their everyday lives.

Students and participants are encouraged and challenged to find God in all aspects of their experience at FYI. The outdoor engagement of the institute provides raw experiences of encounter that many people are not used to experiencing in their normal rhythms of everyday life. The adventure of FYI therefore can be seen when participants are challenged to God in the uncomfortable and challenging portions of the institute.

The joy and discovery of the institute is not found in any one particular moment built into the program or encapsulated in any one memory of my time at FYI. Rather it is a patchwork quilt of conversations and encounters with fellow participants of the institute as I have watched them transform throughout the course of the institute. I can tell that they have had moments of discovery that fills them full of the Spirit and brings forth a sense of pure joy. This joy is perhaps one of the spiritual hallmarks of the Francis Youth Institute as it highlights the depths of growth and discovery that participants are allowed to encounter in the sacred space that this amazing program creates year after year.



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LEARN HEBREW from scratch

October 29
November 5, 12, 26
December 3, 10

12-1 PM, HUB 315

Feel free to bring lunch.
RSVP not required for GU
students. Others please
consult with Rabbi Dr.
Goldstein at
(509) 313-6788.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

November 6, 2018

Fall Flannery Lecture
Speaker: Andrew Prevot, Ph.D.
Professor of Systematic
Theology, Boston College
"Unrestricted Love: Blackness
and Catholicity as Interrelated
Marks of Christian Life"
6 PM, Cataldo Hall Globe Rm

Nov 2 & Dec 6, 2018

Shabbat Shalom
Presented by Jewish Bulldogs
5:30 PM, Hemmingson Center,
Reflection Rm.

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Religious Studies

A Letter from the Chair

Dr. Kevin B. McCrudden

Now with the first weeks of the semester behind us I wanted to take stock of some things to be grateful for as we begin another academic year. Perhaps most noticeably, we have a new building complete with fresh air and sleek hallway benches! We also have one of our own colleagues on the new building committee, who will advocate for improvements and additions to make the space even nicer and efficient. Come visit us in the Humanities Building (HUB), situated between Hughes and Jepson.

As many of you already know, our major continues to grow (now up to 19 students) as does our department. This year sees the addition of three new colleagues who will be teaching in the WC area of the core and the emergence of a new Catholic Studies program housed within our department. On the horizon lies what will soon be a fully vetted and approved majors and minors curriculum that promises to nurture continued growth and enhance our already central role in embodying the University mission. Thank you, everyone!



Congratulations to Religious Studies faculty honored at Gonzaga's 2018 Academic Awards Convocation: Dr. Matthew Rindge, *Profession Contribution* (Tenured) and Sr. Joy Milos, CSJ, *Professor Emerita*.

Faculty Spotlight

Welcome New Religious Studies Faculty!



Left to right. Dr. Dan Pschaida, Adjunct Instructor; Matt Wilson, Adjunct Instructor; Dr. Richard Callahan, Lecturer.

Dr. Richard Callahan grew up in coastal Massachusetts, just south of Boston. He holds a MA in Folklore and Folklife from Western Kentucky University and finally an MA and PhD in Religious Studies from University of California, Santa Barbara. He recently moved to Spokane from Columbia, Missouri, where he was a faculty member at the University of Missouri. Dr. Callahan's interests are rooted in the study of religion in the Americas but have turned outward from that location to explore global networks of exchange and their intersections with localized and indigenous cultures and religions. Within that larger geographic area, his interests focus on cultures of work, popular culture, and religion in everyday life. His first book was about religious formations and responses to the development of industrial coal mining in eastern Kentucky. His current research focuses on the 19th century American whaling industry, in particular their extended voyages in the Pacific and thinking about religion in the spaces of the ocean during that time period.

This semester he is teaching Native American Religions. Looking forward he hopes to develop and teach courses on religion and globalization as well as religion and water in global comparative perspective, since water is increasingly becoming a topic of worldwide concern. In his

free time, Dr. Callahan likes to go kayaking on the local rivers and lakes as well as camp with his family all over the Pacific Northwest.

Coming from Northern Illinois, **Matt Wilson** is an Anthropologist of Religion who specializes in Comparative Religion. He completed a BA in Religious Studies at Carroll College in Southern Wisconsin, an MA in Islamic Societies and Cultures from the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), an MA in the History of Religions from the University of Chicago, and is nearly finished with his PhD in Religion and Culture from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Matt's PhD dissertation is an ethnography of religious pluralism titled "Pious Polemics: Muslim and Christian theological debate on the streets of London," and is based on several years of anthropological fieldwork with Muslim and Christian public evangelists in London, England. His decision to pursue Religious Studies comes from an enjoyment of the existential questions inherent in the subject matter – what are my values and where do they come from? What am I willing to stand for...and why? Religious Studies continues to introduce him to multiple attempts across history and cultures to approach questions like these with fresh, honest, and very human eyes.

After moving here with his family in 2017, Matt has embraced the outdoor lifestyle through backpacking, fly fishing, getting lost in the woods, and foraging for wild foods. This semester he is teaching Islamic Civilization, and hopes to teach courses on comparative topics in the future. Matt is excited to delve into World and Comparative Religions here at GU, and believes that the honest, open, and curious nature of his students will foster the ability to welcome difference.

Daniel Azim Pschaida hails from San Diego, California and taught for two years in the Flagstaff mountains at Northern Arizona University, before relocating in 2017 to the Northwest with his wife Tiara. He is excited to be working with such dedicated students at Gonzaga's gorgeous campus. Passionate about both education and promoting interfaith awareness and mutual appreciation, he majored in child development and then went into Religious Studies

in graduate school, earning a master's from the University of Iowa, and a PhD from the University of California at Riverside in 2015. His academic work is at the nexus of Islamic Studies and Religion in America, researching Islam in the United States. His dissertation was an ethnographic study of young Muslim college students in the Pacific West and their discourse on the relationship between faith and citizenship, racial and religious diversity, and issues of gender and sexuality. He is currently teaching two sections of Islamic Civilization with Gonzaga this semester, and two sections of Introduction to Religion with Eastern WA University.

Dr. Pschaida hopes to get a chance to teach a course on religious and philosophical themes of Harry Potter or perhaps on religious movements of peace and violence. He has volunteered, worked, or studied in Mapuche-land in Chile, Macau, China, and Amman, Jordan. When not working, you can find him hiking, playing basketball, soccer, tennis, or racquetball, or Geek-ing out with a SciFi or Fantasy novel. Still new to the area and looking for friends, do not hesitate to say Hi.

Student Spotlight

Isabel Gregorio '19



Senior Religious Studies major and Catholic Studies minor, Isabel Gregorio, is another exemplary student in the program. She was born in the Philippines and moved to Kirkland, WA when she was only ten years old.

Outside of her major she is currently working on getting her certification in Elementary Education and Teaching English as a Second Language. Throughout her time at Gonzaga, she has been involved in a variety of organizations: Housing and Residence Life, Resident Assistant; Residence Hall Association, President; International Honors Society for Educators, Kappa Delta Pi V.P.; Gonzaga ESL Community Outreach, English tutor for immigrants and refugees around the community.

Isabel believes her desire to study religions is very much rooted in her Catholic faith as well as her Filipino upbringing. Assimilating into American culture taught her to reflect on her unique childhood and as she got older she became more and more

influenced by the Jesuit foundations. Her time at Gonzaga can be characterized by growth, both academically and spiritually because her experience in the classroom has really pushed her outside her comfort zone. In particular, Isabel's favorite class was Dr. Sheveland's Religion and Violence because it prompted her to evaluate her own beliefs as well as gain a variety of perspectives.

After graduation, Isabel has been accepted into the Notre Dame Alliance for Catholic Education Program (ACE). This is a two year program in which she will acquire a Master's degree, while serving as a teacher in an under resourced Catholic school. In the future, Isabel hopes to teach English as a New Language because she believes her experience with being an English Language Learner and educator will give her the opportunity to provide high quality education to those who need it most. When reflecting on her experience at Gonzaga and as a Religious Studies major, Isabel believes her Jesuit education has shaped her into a woman with and for others as she chooses to serve the underrepresented and under resourced population. We wish Isabel good luck and cannot wait to see what the future holds for her!