
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



Department of Religion

1879 Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544 | 609-258-4481

Graduate Study: Religion in the Americas

Program Overview

Graduate students concentrating in the field of Religion in the Americas examine the history of religious thought, institutions, movements, symbols, performances, and lived religious experience in the Americas. Students may also consider aspects of religious life in the contemporary Americas from an historically-informed perspective.

The Religion Department's graduate curriculum provides students with a grounding in theory and method in the study of religion with courses that foster conversation across the fields of concentration within the department.

Certain courses within the Religion in the Americas subfield introduce students to the history and historiography of the field. These include American Religion to 1865; Religion in Twentieth-Century America; Religion and Church in Mexican History; Religion in Colonial Latin America.

Additional courses address topics in the field such as The Social Gospel in America; African American Women and Religion; The Visual and Material Cultures of American Religion; Race, Religion, and the Harlem Renaissance; American Religious Utopias and Communitarian Experiments; Religion, Race, and Gender in Latin America; Revivalism in American History; Religious Authority in America.

Special Features

The weekly Religion in the Americas Workshop brings together graduate students, faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and scholars invited from other institutions to discuss works-in-progress. Recent visitors include Bruce Dorsey, Jonathan Ebel, Jennifer Hughes, Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Kenneth Mills, Deborah Dash Moore, Sally Promey, and Josef Sorett.

The subfield sponsors additional guest lectures and conferences, such as the recent series, "Made in America: The History of Black Gospel Music," and the conference on Race and Religion in American History.

Degree Requirements

All degree candidates are expected to have a reading knowledge of the two modern foreign languages most appropriate to their fields of concentration. The choice of languages should be made in consultation with advisors and the rest of the subfield faculty.

The General Examination includes four units. Two of these systematically cover American religious history and historiography from colonial contact to the twenty-first century. The third examination takes the form of a paper that demonstrates facility with primary sources in light of the historiography of a particular period. The fourth General Examination is a historiographical and methodological essay that is intended to establish the groundwork for a dissertation prospectus.

Normally, all graduate students serve at some point in their careers as Assistants in Instruction. An Assistant leads preceptorials in undergraduate courses and is responsible for grading students as well. The Department views such experience as integral to the professional development it offers. It also encourages graduate students to give lectures in appropriate undergraduate courses taught by members of the faculty.

For the dissertation, students devise an area of research in consultation with faculty.

For more information, visit religion.princeton.edu

Religion in the Americas Faculty

Wallace D. Best, Professor of Religion and African American Studies

(PhD, History, Northwestern University)

Professor Best is a specialist in African American religious history with research interests in Pentecostalism, religion and literature, religion and sexuality, and Womanist theology. He is the author of *Passionately Human, No Less Divine: Religion and Culture in Black Chicago, 1915-1952* (Princeton, 2005) and *Langston's Salvation: American Religion and the Bard of Harlem* (NYU, 2017). His recent graduate courses include "Race, Religion, and the Harlem Renaissance," "The Social Gospel in America," and "Sexuality and Religion in America."

Jessica Delgado, Assistant Professor of Religion

(PhD, History, University of California, Berkeley)

Professor Delgado is a historian of religion in Latin America with a focus on Mexico in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Her research interests include women, gender, and sexuality, the Catholic Church in colonial society, race, caste, and religion, and the intersection between social and spiritual status in the early modern world. She is currently completing a book titled "Troubling Devotion: Laywomen and the Church in Colonial Mexico" (Cambridge, forthcoming 2018) Her recent graduate courses include "Religion, Race, and Gender in Latin America" and "Religion and Church in Mexican History."

Eddie S. Glaude, William S. Tod Professor of Religion and African American Studies

(PhD, Religion, Princeton University)

Professor Glaude's research interests include American pragmatism, specifically the work of John Dewey, as well as African American religious history and its place in American public life. In addition to serving as a faculty member in the Religion in the Americas subfield, Professor Glaude is a faculty member in the Religion, Ethics, and Politics and Religion and Philosophy subfields in the Department of Religion. He is the author of *Exodus! Religion, Race, and Nation in Early 19th Century Black America* (Chicago, 2000), *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America* (Chicago, 2007), *African American Religion: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2014), and *Democracy in Black* (Crown, 2016). His recent graduate courses include "Religion and the Tradition of Social Theory," "Studies in Religion and Philosophy," and "Introduction to the African American Intellectual Tradition."

Seth Perry, Assistant Professor of Religion

(PhD, University of Chicago Divinity School)

Professor Perry's research interests include print culture, American religious history broadly, and the creation of individual religious authority. He is currently completing a book titled "Abandoned Quarries: Bibles and Authority in Early-National America" in which he explores the material, rhetorical, and performative aspects of bible usage in the early nineteenth century. His recent graduate courses include "American Religion to 1865" and "Religious Authority in America."

Judith Weisenfeld, Agate Brown and George L. Collord Professor of Religion

(PhD, Religion, Princeton University)

Professor Weisenfeld is a specialist in African American religious history with research interests in religion, film, and popular culture, women, gender, and sexuality, religion in cities, and religion and race. She is the author of *Hollywood Be Thy Name: African American Religion in American Film, 1929-1949* (California, 2007) and *African American Women and Christian Activism: New York's Black YWCA, 1905-1945* (Harvard 1997), and *New World A Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration* (NYU, 2017). Her recent graduate courses include "Twentieth-Century American Religious History," "American Religious Utopias and Communal Experiments," "Space and Place in American Religion," and "Black Gods and Utopian Visions."

Resources in Other Departments

Students in this subfield are encouraged to work with professors in various other departments at Princeton, including Anthropology, History, and Sociology.

They also draw upon the resources of interdisciplinary programs such as the Center for African American Studies, the Program in American Studies, the Program in Judaic Studies, the Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies, the Program in Latin American Studies, and the Center for the Study of Religion.