



John C. Danforth Center on
RELIGION AND POLITICS

2020

A N N U A L R E P O R T

2021

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS



John C. Danforth Center on
RELIGION AND POLITICS

OUR MISSION

The Center serves as an open venue for fostering rigorous scholarship and informing broad academic and public communities about the intersections of religion and U.S. politics.

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IMPACT

The 2020-2021 academic year marks the tenth year of the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics. In 2010, Washington University leaders determined there was a need for a national academic center focused on the enormously consequential relationship between religion and politics in America over its history, a relationship acknowledged by our national founders to be both a significant advantage to a democratic republic and a challenge to a society committed to individual rights of conscience and belief.

Reflecting the deep legacy of U.S. Senator John C. Danforth and the vision articulated by scholars and professional leaders across the U.S. who helped create it, the Center would be a bridge between different perspectives, help shape conversations and understanding through research and critical analysis, and model robust discourse while addressing issues of the greatest national importance and public contention. Since its founding, the Center's work has complemented and reflected Washington University's desire to encourage and support an ethos of wide-ranging exploration to enhance the lives and livelihoods of students,

the people of the greater St. Louis community, the country, and the world. Our unique impact emerges from our explicit investment educating both students and the broader public. Metrics of our success include robust enrollment in courses, vigorous attendance at public events, a strong following of our online journal and social media outlets, inquiries from journalists, educators, and activists interested in our ideas, gifts from alumni and other donors, and supportive comments from constituents. The Center has built tremendous momentum in all of these areas over the past ten years, and we are committed to increasing our impact still further in the future.

2010

The Center is founded with a gift directed by former U.S. Senator John C. Danforth from The Danforth Foundation to Washington University in St. Louis



John C. Danforth Center on RELIGION AND POLITICS



2012

Religion & Politics online journal launched as a project of the Center

Religion & Politics Fit For Polite Company

Mark Jordan of Harvard and Darren Dochuk of Purdue join Center faculty

First postdoctoral fellowship in residence

Colloquium on American Religion, Politics, and Culture initiated

Reverend Priscilla Wood Neaves Professorship established by William B. Neaves



2014



Center organizes *Beyond the Culture Wars* academic conference at WashU

Center hosts U.S. Senators **John Danforth** and **Joe Lieberman** for public event

Mark Valeri of Union Theological Seminary and Lerone Martin of Eden Theological Seminary join Center faculty



2016

Center hosts **Jon Meacham** for student engagement and public event

John Inazu of WashU Law joins faculty



The Danforth Dialogues: Envisioning the Future of Religion and Politics in America hosted by the Center on the eve of a presidential debate hosted by WashU

Center hosts **Cardinal Timothy Dolan** for public event



2018



Religion & Politics in An Age of Fracture lecture series



Center's journal *Religion & Politics* celebrates five years with special print edition

2020



COVID-19 pandemic forces move to online classes, colloquium, events, and operations

Ten members of the WashU class of 2020 graduate with a minor in religion and politics

2011

Marie Griffith comes from Harvard to begin tenure as first director



Center's National Advisory Board formed

Leigh Eric Schmidt of Harvard joins Center faculty



"Few issues are more critical to the well being of a democracy than how religious beliefs—or the denial of such beliefs—coexist with civic virtue and of how the 'truths' of the one are made compatible with the toleration and good will required by the other."

SENATOR JOHN C. DANFORTH

2013

Undergraduate minor in religion and politics developed and offered to WashU students

Laurie Maffly-Kipp of University of North Carolina joins Center faculty



First dissertation completion fellowships awarded

Danforth Distinguished Lecture Series featuring **David A. Hollinger**, University of California-Berkeley



2015



Center hosts **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks** for public engagement

Sarah Barringer Gordon is first visiting scholar in residence

Religion, Medicine, and Law lecture series

Center hosts panel discussion *Religious Responses to Ferguson*



This Center studies the convergence of religion and politics in America in a distinctive way. While not defined as a subset of religious studies, political science, or law, we take a multidisciplinary approach to this subject matter that utilizes tools from these and other fields

FACULTY OF THE JOHN C. DANFORTH CENTER ON RELIGION AND POLITICS

2017

Center hosts *Jews & Muslims Turn Hate to Humanity: Interfaith Collaboration in Times of Religious Violence* in response to local acts against St. Louis's Jewish community



Fannie Bialek of Brown University joins faculty



2019

Tazeen Ali of University of Edinburgh joins faculty



Center hosts public panel discussion *Welcoming the Stranger to St. Louis: Religious Responses to Recent Immigrants and Refugees*

Center sponsors **Robert George** and **Cornel West** for student engagement and public event



LETTER FROM THE

Chancellor



As Chancellor of Washington University, I am delighted to celebrate the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics' 10th anniversary and another year of incredible accomplishments, especially at a time that feels extraordinarily complicated.

This year has made abundantly clear that the intersections of religion and politics are steeped in our United States culture, as it also is in many places around the world. From ongoing religious conversations about vaccines to dialogue around race and xenophobia to still others around the role the church should play in social action, political elections, and more — the many intersections are all around us, which is why the Danforth Center on Religion and Politics is exceedingly important as we bring people together to engage in thoughtful and respectful dialogue about these and other issues and as we prepare the next generation of leaders who are poised to address the challenges facing this world.

“As we approach the weeks and months ahead, I hope we can find ways to continue to name and address the challenges we face while simultaneously finding joy in the things that fulfill and sustain us.”

This annual report offers just some of the highlights of that paramount work. Though it has been a challenging year in the midst of the pandemic and other matters of international importance, I am grateful that the Center persevered, leaning in to its commitment “to confront the gravest problems facing us all and to offer thoughtful ideas about how to remedy them and work for a better world.”

This year the Center has done just that by promoting research, teaching, and public engagement. For example, I'm pleased that we currently have 31 undergraduate students with a declared minor in religion and politics, and this year the Center offered 14 undergraduate courses with more than 400 students enrolled. In addition, the Center welcomed four postdoctoral fellows into its midst. Meanwhile, the Center hosted several thought-provoking virtual events and published weekly to its journal.

Through this report, I hope you will learn more about some of these and many other of the Center's exceptional initiatives, and I look forward to celebrating many more decades of the Danforth Center on Religion and Politics' significance and success.

ANDREW MARTIN
Chancellor

LETTER FROM THE

Center Director



The past year has been a somber one for us all. The World Health Organization has counted close to four million deaths from COVID-19. Many have lost loved ones to the disease while many others have lost jobs, housing, and food security.

Any number of other crises have also plagued us. Racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia continue to bedevil communities throughout the United States. Politically fueled fury such as we witnessed during the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 is producing deeply destructive consequences. Religion and politics have clashed in ways that affect all of our everyday lives. In times such as these, even the most optimistic among us have felt overwhelmed and desolate.

At the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics, it is our mission to confront the gravest problems facing us all and to offer thoughtful ideas about how to remedy them and work for a better world. We analyze both the worst and the best that religious and political attachments rouse in people, while creating teaching spaces that model how to engage these issues despite differences. I hope you see in the pages of this report our mission in action: our efforts with students in the classroom, the virtual lectures and conversations we've sponsored this year, and the writings we have produced in our *Religion & Politics* journal and other venues.

“I hope we remember some of the lessons of the past year, especially what we want not to take for granted and how to stay connected to one another.”

Through it all, we have practiced the discipline of hope: a hope that inspires us to labor for, and believe in, a post-pandemic future that is better than the past.

We are deeply mindful that some of our readers have suffered this year in ways we may not know, and we send you our heartfelt sympathy and commiseration. Thank you for the many ways you support our work and inspire confidence in the time to come.

R. MARIE GRIFFITH
Center Director

RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Learn more on our website:

WWW.RAP.WUSTL.EDU/ACADEMICS

Fostering exceptional research and scholarship is central to the academic mission of the Center.

The objective is to provide critical context and careful reflection on the intensely trafficked intersections of religion and politics in both the nation's past and present and to maximize its reach among academics, students, journalists, policy makers, and fellow citizens.



RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Undergraduate Courses

Coursework in religion and politics provides a foundation and structure for students to engage in critical reflection, research and scholarship, and analytic writing, whether enrolled in individual courses or pursuing our minor in religion and politics.

Courses cover a wide spectrum of topics related to the intersection of American religion and politics, ranging from economics and politics in the British colonies to enduring and contemporary issues such as nationalism and globalization, gender, race, and religious freedom. The collective focus of the curriculum is the cultivation of research and interpretive skills necessary for analyzing and responding to issues that shape society and culture in the United States.

“I don’t think people realize how religion and politics apply to so many things—policy, law, medicine—until they dive into the intersections. Even as a pre-med student, I found it to inform so much of my study and what I want to do with my future.”

DENYE MICKENS, CLASS OF 2021

FALL 2020

Religious Freedom in America

John Inazu and Mark Valeri

The intersection of religion and law in American society has sparked some of the fiercest cultural engagements in recent memory: Should a for-profit religious corporation have a right not to fund birth control for its employees? Can a public college expel campus religious groups whose membership is not open to all students? May a Muslim grow a beard for religious reasons in prison? Should a cake baker or a florist be permitted to refuse services for a gay wedding? Can a church hire and fire its ministers for any reason? These current debates and the issues that frame them are interwoven in the American story. This course introduces students to the major texts and historical arguments underlying that story. Drawing from the respective expertise of the instructors, it exposes students to a variety of scholarly methods related to the issue: legal history and case law, intellectual history and canonical texts, social history and narrative accounts, and political philosophy and contemporary analyses. This course is for first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Islamophobia and U.S. Politics

Tazeen Ali

The presence of Muslim minorities in the West is increasingly divisive across the U.S. and Europe as political leaders appeal to voters’ fear of the “Other” to promote Islamophobic agendas that reshape immigration and asylum policies and redefine Western identity as Christian. Politicians further exploit the rise of extremist groups like

ISIS to justify anti-Muslim rhetoric and critique multiculturalism, claiming that Islam and the West are inherently antithetical. In this course we examine the phenomenon of Islamophobia as a form of anti-Muslim racism. We explore how while the post-9/11 context gave way to an increase in incidents of anti-Muslim violence, contemporary manifestations of Islamophobia are deeply rooted in state level anti-black racism from the early twentieth century. We also analyze public U.S. debates on the boundaries of freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

“This was an amazing course that I would recommend to any student. I’ve walked away from the course with so much more knowledge, and the course has helped me to think critically about the histories we know.”

STUDENT IN VIRTUES, VICES, VALUES: REGULATING MORALITY IN MODERN AMERICA COURSE

Virtues, Vices, Values: Regulating Morality in Modern America

Marie Griffith

This course takes morality and the question of “what’s right” seriously as a lens through which to understand and assess modern American history. “Morality” is, of course, a devilishly flexible rhetoric, a language invoked to tell people how to act and how to be good, or, conversely, to criticize and to shame. When the state or a community wants its citizens or members to be “good,”

UNDERGRADUATE MINOR

The religion and politics minor provides an opportunity for sustained exploration of the ways in which religion and politics have intersected in American culture, in both historical and contemporary terms.

As part of the minor program, students may examine any number of issues, including church-state relations, religion's role in shaping gender and sexuality debates, religion and electoral politics, public conflicts over the nexus of religion and science, and religion's entwining with reform movements (from abolition to environmentalism).

The Center's interdisciplinary minor attracts students from many disciplines, including natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities; whether pre-med, pre-law, or pursuing futures in education, business, or the arts, they report their studies are enriched by our curriculum.

Minors are invited to the Center's colloquium series and to special engagements with guests and visiting scholars throughout the academic year.

REQUIREMENTS

One of the following gateway courses:

L57 RelPol 201: Religion and American Society
(3 units)

L57 RelPol 210: The Good Life between Religion and Politics
(3 units)

L57 RelPol 225: Religion and Politics in American History

I60 BB 120: Religious Freedom in America

12 additional units, nine of which must be taught by Center faculty.

Attendance at five events sponsored by the Center on Religion and Politics (lectures, colloquia, lunch discussions, film screenings).

it crafts laws and creates customs to encourage or inhibit behaviors. This class examines how state and non-state actors have attempted to regulate the lived experiences of Americans and the conflicts that emerge over what, exactly, is correct, or right, or good for individuals, society, and the state.

The FBI and Religion

Lerone Martin

This seminar examines the relationship between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and religion (i.e., faith communities, clerics, and religious professionals) as a way to study and understand twentieth century religion and politics. The course will investigate the history of the FBI as well as the various ways in which the FBI and religious groups have interacted. The course will pay particular attention to what the professor calls the four interrelated "modes" of FBI-religious engagement: Counter-Intelligence and Surveillance, Coordination and Cooperation, Censorship and Publicity, and Consultation. It interrogates what values the state impresses upon its citizens and what values citizens want the state to uphold.

Islam, Gender, Sexuality

Tazeen Ali

The return of White nationalism and misogyny to the public sphere since the 2016 election has reinvigorated the trope of the subjugated Muslim woman as backwards and subservient to her male counterparts. Rather than devote our time to dispel stereotypes, in this course, we address the extent to which Western theories of feminism



"I tell younger students to take the Center's classes because the professors do an amazing job at making the Center feel like home, where you are appreciated and valued on an academic level. It instilled a lot of confidence in me."

EMILY FOX, CLASS OF 2021

are useful to account for Muslim women's experiences across historical period and geographical region. By examining discourses of gender, sexuality, the ideals of the feminine and masculine in Islamic scriptures and jurisprudence, and subsequent encounters with Western imperialism, we investigate how gender informs social, political, religious, and family life in Islamic cultures. We employ a chronological approach to these topics, beginning with the status of women in seventh century Arabia, to the period of Islamic expansion across Asia, North Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula, to the colonial period ending with the contemporary post 9/11 and post 2016 U.S. contexts, wherein

debates over the status of Muslim women in society emerge with renewed vigor.

Pilgrims and Seekers: American Spirituality from Transcendentalism to the Present

Leigh Schmidt

The seminar focuses on the formation of "spirituality" in American culture from the Transcendentalist world of Ralph Waldo Emerson on through more recent expressions of the "spiritual-but-not-religious" sensibility. How did "spirituality" come to be seen as something positively distinct from "organized religion"? What are the main contours of spiritual seeking in American culture, especially among those who claim no specific religious affiliation? The course also explores the social, political, and cultural consequences of this turn to the spiritual over the religious: for example, the consecration of liberal individualism, the relationship of religious exploration to both environmentalism and consumerism, the politics of cultural appropriation, the negotiation of religious pluralism, and the pursuit of the spiritual in art.

Due to the pandemic, PROFESSOR LAURIE MAFFLY-KIPP taught her spring 2021 course using a hybrid model with some students in the classroom and some students online at the same time.

"I appreciate the effort the Center put into its students—treating us as a cohort and the endearing Zoom gatherings this year. It stood out in comparison to my other programs."

ANDREW CELLI, CLASS OF 2021

SPRING 2021

218 students completed the Center's fall 2020 courses, and 172 students completed the spring 2021 courses.

Religion and American Society

Laurie Maffly-Kipp

This course explores religious life in the United States. We will focus our study on groups and movements that highlight distinctive ways of being both “religious” and “American,” including the Americanization of global religions in the U.S. context. Major themes will include religious encounter and conflict; secularization, resurgent traditionalism, and new religious establishments; experimentalism, eclecticism, and so-called “spiritual” countercultures; the relationship between religious change and broader social and political currents (including clashes over race, class, gender, and sexuality); and the challenges of religious multiplicity in the US.

Religion and Music in American Culture

Alexia Williams

In this course, students will examine public discourse on popular music as a way of understanding questions of religious identity and community formation. Through case

studies ranging from the Pueblo Indian dance controversy of the 1920s to post-9/11 disputes about the Islamic call to prayer, students will consider how debates over what “counts” as sacred or secular music reveal disputes over notions of religious authority and authenticity in American culture.

Religion, Race, and Health in Modern America

Andrew Walker-Cornetta

Examining the intersections of religion, race, and medicine in the United States, this course asks how different engagements with and ideas about sickness, disability, and wellness have collaborated to define the meaning of a good life in modern U.S. history—and who gets to have one.

Muslims in the Media and Popular Culture

Tazeen Ali

In the post 9/11 context of the United States, Muslims have been a constant presence in news media, typically cast in a negative light as political others who are backwards, threatening, and inherently prone to violence. This pattern has long been replicated in films where Muslims serve as static and dehumanized perpetrators of violence and/or as symbols of a backwards and depraved culture, antithetical to U.S. values and interests. In recent years, however, Muslims have become increasingly visible in the entertainment industry, as protagonists and producers of their own media, including G. Willow Wilson’s *Ms. Marvel*, Hulu’s *Ramy*, and Netflix’s *Man Like Mobeen*. We will be pairing films, television shows, music, and comics with

scholarship on Islam and religion in the media, analyzing Muslim representation and storytelling in contemporary popular culture. We will evaluate these works on their own terms, noting the ways in which gender and racial hierarchies dictate who gets to represent American Muslims, while also assessing how these new media both disrupt and further reify Muslims’ construction as religious and political outsiders.

Between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Freedom

Tazeen Ali and Lerone Martin

This course focuses on the political and spiritual lives of Martin and Malcolm. We will examine their personal biographies, speeches, writings, representations, FBI files, and legacies as a way to better understand how the intersections of religion, race, and politics came to bear upon the freedom struggles of people of color in the U.S. and abroad. The course also takes seriously the evolutions in both Martin and Malcolm’s political approaches and intellectual development, focusing especially on the last years of their respective lives. We will also examine the critical literature that takes on the leadership styles and political philosophies of these communal leaders, as well as the very real opposition and surveillance they faced from state forces like the police and FBI. We will discuss the subtleties of their political analyses, pinpointing the key differences and similarities of their philosophies, approaches, and legacies, and we will apply these debates of the mid-twentieth century to contemporary events and social movements in terms of how their legacies are



articulated and what we can learn from them in struggles for justice and recognition in twenty-first century America and beyond.

PROFESSOR TAZEEN ALI leads a student discussion as **PROFESSOR LERONE MARTIN** listens during their co-taught course.

Global Circuits: Religion, Race, Empire

Candace Lukasik

This seminar explores how American entanglements of race and religion shape and are part of larger global processes. Over the course of the semester, we will investigate these entanglements through conceptual, historical, and ethnographic questions and insights on the remapping of religious traditions and communal experiences onto imperial terrain.

Religion and the Origins of Capitalism

Mark Valeri

This course explores the economic, cultural, and social history of the origins of Anglo-American capitalism from 1500 to 1800. Throughout we will discuss the worldviews and day-to-day business decisions of the merchants who created England’s transatlantic market order and empire. Rather than treat early capitalism only in terms of material or purely economic dynamics, it probes the intellectual constructs that combined with commercial innovations to form capitalism into a social system.

“By far the best course I have ever taken at WashU. Every class was the highlight of my week, and the material is tangible and applicable to today. I’m a STEM student, but I think everybody should take this class. Not at all your average social studies; I wish it didn’t end.”

STUDENT IN FBI AND RELIGION COURSE

RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Colloquium

The Center sponsors an ongoing colloquium to foster discussion of new scholarship in the broad domains of American religion, politics, and culture. It is a research-oriented workshop that aims to build a multidisciplinary community among students, fellows, and faculty, all drawn to the intellectual questions that animate the Center's work.

“Although we were unable to meet in person, the colloquium helped build a sense of intellectual community. I enjoyed the bimonthly discussions and looked forward to contributing and learning from my colleagues each time.”

CHRISTINA DAVIDSON, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

2020-2021 COLLOQUIUM PRESENTATIONS

Lerone Martin, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 The FBI and Christianity Today

Candace Lukasik, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 Economy of Blood: The Persecuted Church and the Racialization of American Copts

Alexia Williams, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 Venerable Henriette Delille:
 A Colloquial Hagiography

Christina Davidson, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 Converting Hispaniola: Religious
 Race-Making in the Dominican Americas

Joe Bartzel, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 Racial Justice, Transition,
 and Uncertainty in the U.S.

**Elena Kravchenko, Washington University
 in St. Louis Religious Studies Program**
 Making Children Orthodox: Parental
 Disciplines and Desires

Amy Gais, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 A New Kind of Politics?

Andrew Walker-Cornetta, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 Bad Devotion: Mothers, Mental Deficiency
 Professionals, and the Profligacy of Care

Laurie Maffly-Kipp, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 ‘This is our time’: Mormons in West Africa

Tazeen Ali, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 Interfaith and Intrafaith Solidarities
 at the Women’s Mosque of America

Valerie Elverton-Dixon, Independent Scholar
 The Christology of Jeremiah Wright, Jr.

Marie Griffith, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 Women’s Varied Roles in the History of Clergy
 Sex Abuse within the U.S. Catholic Church

Mark Valeri, John C. Danforth
Center on Religion and Politics
 Choosing Religion: Protestantism, Other Religions,
 and Conversion in Britain and New England

One extension of the Center's educational mission is to inform members of the broader St. Louis, national, and international communities through our events and publications, while modeling discussion and debate that value each person's humanity as the cornerstone of a productive democracy.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Learn more on our website:

[RAP.WUSTL.EDU/EVENTS](https://rap.wustl.edu/events)



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Interpersonal Relations Across Political Divides: People of Faith Building Bridges from Polarization to Reconciliation

JOHN C. DANFORTH AND MATT MALONE IN DISCUSSION

March 11, 2021



John C. Danforth



Matt Malone

People of faith in the U.S. today are as politically polarized as other Americans, prompting painful breakdowns in personal relationships and communities. What would it take to accept responsibility for actively healing these political and religious divisions, activating solutions rather than continuing assaults? **Senator John C. Danforth** and **Father Matt Malone**, two priests from different Christian churches and political parties, joined Center director Marie Griffith for a conversation about bridge building, accountability, and reconciliation.

John C. Danforth is an ordained Episcopal priest and a former U.S. Senator from Missouri. Following his elected service, Senator Danforth held appointments in both Republican and Democratic Administrations as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and later, special envoy to Sudan. He is also an author, most recently of *The Relevance of Religion* (2015). Matt Malone is the President and Editor in Chief of America

Media. Father Malone began his tenure on October 1, 2012. Previously, he served for two years as an associate editor, from 2007-2009, when he covered foreign policy and domestic politics. Father Malone entered the Society of Jesus in 2002 and was ordained a priest on June 9, 2012, by Edward Cardinal Egan, late Archbishop of New York.



133 COMMUNITY MEMBERS joined this virtual conversation with many more watching the recording on the Center's website.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Reading Muslims through the Culture Wars

A PUBLIC LECTURE BY ZAREENA GREWAL

April 12, 2021



Zareena Grewal



Tazeen Ali

The Qur'an is one of the most iconic objects in American debates about racial and religious tolerance. Is the Qur'an a "good book"? Is it like the Bible and other scriptures? Or is its message more violent, more misogynistic, more intolerant? Or is the danger in the power readers ascribe to the book? Tracking the Qur'an's social life as an American culture-object, anthropologist **Zareena Grewal** provides a window into today's culture wars and the racialization of Islam. After her prepared remarks, Grewal engaged in a conversation with Center professor **Tazeen Ali**, who also moderated audience Q&A.

Zareena A. Grewal is an Associate Professor of American Studies, Religious Studies, Anthropology, and Ethnicity, Race, and Migration at Yale University. Her first book, *Islam is a Foreign Country: American Muslims and the Global Crisis of Authority* (NYU 2013), is a historical ethnography of transnational Muslim intellectual networks that link U.S. mosques to Islamic movements in post-colonial



GREWAL presented her research via a Zoom webinar hosted by the Center.

Middle East through debates about the reform of Islam, based on fieldwork in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. She is currently working on a social life of the Qur'an as a racialized text-object at the center of the culture wars in the U.S. Her writing also appears in the *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and other such venues. She is also a documentary filmmaker with films including *By the Dawn's Early Light: Chris Jackson's Journey to Islam* and the forthcoming "Muslims in America."

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Reckoning with History: Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust

A DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSOR DAVID KERTZER AND FATHER JOHN PAWLIKOWSKI

April 26, 2021



David Kertzer



John Pawlikowski



Rori Picker Neiss

Maharat Rori Picker Neiss, Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis, moderated a discussion on the newly unsealed Vatican archives and the role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust with **Professor David Kertzer**, Brown University, and **Father John Pawlikowski**, Catholic Theological Union.

Attendees were offered advance screening of the documentary *Holy Silence*, which takes a fresh look at a topic that has sparked controversy for decades. During the years leading up to WWII, what was the Vatican's reaction to the rise of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany? After the war began, how did the pope respond to the horrors of the Holocaust? In telling that story, *Holy Silence* focuses on American officials who worked behind the scenes to influence the Vatican's actions.

Pulitzer-Prize-winning author David Kertzer is the Paul Dupee University Professor of Social Science at Brown University. Kertzer is an authority on Italian politics, society, and history; political symbolism; and anthropological demography. He is co-founder and served for many years as co-editor of the Journal

of Modern Italian Studies. In 2005 Kertzer was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. From 2006 to 2011, he was the Provost of Brown University.

John Pawlikowski is a member of the Order of Friar Servants of Mary (Servites) and was ordained at the University of St. Mary of the Lake. One of the founding faculty members of Catholic Theological Union, he served on the faculty from 1968 until his retirement in 2017. He has been an active participant in the Christian-Jewish Dialogue as well as the wider inter-religious dialogue for nearly fifty years.

Rori Picker Neiss serves as the Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis. She is one of the first graduates of Yeshivat Maharat, a pioneering institution training Orthodox Jewish women to be spiritual leaders and halakhic (Jewish legal) authorities.

This event was cosponsored with the Newmark Institute of the Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis and the Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Congregations Building Bridges: Renewing Civic Engagement as Our Common Purpose

May 26, 2021

Americans today are deeply divided. As the American Academy of Arts & Sciences Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship recently noted, "When Americans are asked what unites us across our differences, the increasingly common answer is *nothing*." Nowhere has this seemed more true than when it comes to religion. Religion has played a crucial

role in promoting conflict and polarization, yet religious communities are an essential part of bridging current social and political divides. This panel discussion of religious leaders and experts intended to foster thinking about ways that religious communities might become spaces that bridge divides, rather than make them deeper—bridge building that is located in a larger sense of civic engagement and community. The panel was inspired by the recent report published by the Commission, "Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century."

Panelists included the **Rev. Traci Blackmon**, Executive Minister of Justice & Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ; **Prof. David Campbell**, Packey J. Dee Professor of American Democracy at the University of Notre Dame; **Sr. Simone Campbell**, Former Executive Director NETWORK Lobby for Social Catholic Justice; **Rabbi Rolando Matalon**, Senior Rabbi at B'nai Jeshurun; **Imam Eldin Susa**, St. Louis Islamic Center NUR; and the **Rev. Dr. Serene Jones**, President of Union Theological Seminary, who moderated the conversation.



Traci Blackmon



Simone Campbell



Eldin Susa



David Campbell



Rolando Matalon



Serene Jones

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Online Journal

Religion & Politics

Fit For Polite Company

Religion & Politics is an online news journal dedicated to the two topics thought unfit for polite company. The journal, founded in 2012, is an important project of the Center and is a core component of the Center's public educational mission.

We feature articles from scholars and journalists who proceed from a single premise: that for better and for worse, religion and politics converge, clash, and shape public life. These intersections happen everywhere, from our homes to our courts, from the statehouse to the schoolhouse, in the lab and on the battlefield. We strive to publish a range of views, rather than

promote a specific political perspective. We honor frank and respectful debate. We inform these discussions by taking the long view, providing historical context, critical analysis, and thorough research with compelling writing. In all of these ways, the journal embodies the vision and values that animate all of the Center's varied undertakings.

WWW.RELIGIONANDPOLITICS.ORG

Readers can easily access the journal's content on mobile devices.



SELECTED ARTICLES FROM THE 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

July 14, 2020

Are Pandemic Protests the Newest Form of Science-Religion Conflict?
By Adam R. Shapiro

August 25, 2020

For Neil Gorsuch, Religious Freedom Hasn't Gone Far Enough
By Jenna Reinbold

October 22, 2020

QAnon's "Messianic Secret"
By Gregory Alan Thornbury

October 27, 2020

Across the Country, Muslims Are Fighting Voter Suppression and Intimidation
By Aysha Khan

October 29, 2020

Will Catholic Voters Decide the Election?
By Elena Trueba

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Supporters of President Donald Trump pray outside the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Online Journal

The terrible events of January 6, 2021, elicited a variety of reactions from Center faculty, and we published our reflections in *Religion & Politics*. The pieces range widely in focus but make a powerful collective whole.

SCHOLARS OF RELIGION AND POLITICS RESPOND TO THE CAPITOL INSURRECTION

by *The Editors* January 12, 2021

January 6, 2021, is a day that will live in infamy. A sitting president, abetted by congressional leaders, incited a violent mob of his supporters, who sieged the United State Capitol in an attempted coup, the scope of which we are still uncovering. All along the route from Trump's rally on the Ellipse to the Capitol, there was no shortage of religious imagery. Some of the rioters carried crosses, or spoke of the "end times," or brandished images of Trump as Jesus. They waved Christian flags and Confederate flags. They wore markers of racism and neo-Nazi loyalty.

We at *Religion & Politics* and the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics condemn the Capitol siege in no uncertain terms. It may be impossible to make sense of the actions of violent extremists, but there are lessons to be

learned from what happened. Some of these pertain to the variety of ways rioters and their supporters, like many before them, have weaponized religion for political ends. In light of these appalling events, we invited the faculty of the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics to share their initial thoughts, bringing their expertise in history, ethics, and religious studies to bear on this fraught moment in U.S. politics.

MARIE GRIFFITH, Director and John C. Danforth Distinguished Professor in the Humanities

There's been a great deal of commentary on the white Christian nationalism on display at the January 6 siege of the U.S. Capitol. The name of God was everywhere, invoked by men and

women claiming to wear God’s armor as patriot soldiers protecting the soul of an exceptionalist nation. Josh Hawley, a Christian nationalist senator who egged on their false belief that the recent presidential election was stolen from Donald Trump, was seen raising his fist in solidarity with those gathered. The blood of Jesus was said to be “covering this place,” as prayers rang out pleading that “the evil of Congress be brought to an end.” Members of Christian militias that spread lies about Muslims were in abundance, as were marks of anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism, and Holocaust nostalgia. It was a menagerie of Trumpian evangelicalism, as far from what many other Christians see as the gospel of Jesus as it seems possible to be.

of nation,” concluding, “We are being held hostage by permanent adolescents.” The armed so-called freedom fighters are doing their best to bring their comic book, their superhero movie, their violent video game, or their Book of Revelation revenge fantasy (isn’t it all the same?) to real life, and their target list includes all of us who don’t accept their reality.

Those of us who don’t accept their reality and who object to Christian nationalism, white supremacist ideology, and self-appointed savior vigilantism are a diverse lot ourselves, occupying what are still starkly divergent political, economic, and religious worlds. We are hardly a “we.” Progressive fans of the Squad in Congress have little in common, policy-wise, with the conservative never-Trumpers who spearheaded the Lincoln Project, and the 2020 election made for strange bedfellows, as so many elections do. But I would wager, or hope, that most dissenters to the riot have at the very least not attached ourselves to the persecution narrative of the Christian nationalist who sees Satanic power in feminism, anti-racist efforts, or religious pluralism. I want to think we reject the hubris of imagining ourselves to be God’s violent foot soldiers in the war against such so-called principalities and powers, that whether we are religious or secular, our everyday lives have meaning through caring for others, not fantasizing the bloody deaths of political foes. How to live among those who see life as a cosmic war between good and evil, self-righteously certain of just who is evil and who shall be victorious, is the great test of our time.

Some Christian critics saw more of the occult than the orthodox in the QAnon conspiracies fueling the rioters’ aspirations to be knight liberators; to be sure, it’s hard to tell the difference between evangelicalism and occultism these days, and the lines are so blurred that the terminology hardly matters anymore. From multiple origins, a conglomeration of superhero narratives have converged, luring countless numbers of Americans to see themselves as, in Ross Douthat’s words, “actors in a world-historical drama, saviors or re-founders of the American Republic.” Analyzing the Capitol insurrectionist whose military gear included patches sporting slogans like “Armor of God” and “God will judge our enemies. We’ll arrange the meeting,” Peter Manseau marvels at “the danger of comic book notions of faith meeting comic book notions

How to live among those who see life as a cosmic war between good and evil, self-righteously certain of just who is evil and who shall be victorious, is the great test of our time.

MARK VALERI, Reverend Priscilla Wood Neaves Distinguished Professor of Religion and Politics

From the American Revolution to the Civil War, the Civil Rights movement, and 9/11, Americans have relied on religious language to assert the importance of momentous events. January 6, 2021, was no different. Insurrectionists, observers, and critics alike deployed the rhetoric of the sacred to describe what happened as a cataclysm, a tragedy.

The sight of the symbols of religion carried by participants in the storming astounded and saddened me. Supporters brandished flags with the name of Jesus, held large Bibles, conducted prayer circles, and marched around blowing shofars to signal divine punishment on the government—an imitation of the story of the fall of the walls of Jericho in the book of Joshua. One could interpret these gestures as parody, more frivolous than reverent. One could also interpret them as literal and deadly serious.

The commentary of much of the media and of politicians on January 6 depended on a different set of tropes, derived from America’s tradition of civil religion. Several pundits and members of Congress denounced the assault on the Capitol as a desecration—the defilement of a holy site. Others spoke of the Capitol as a shrine to democracy, violated by malevolent enemies. President-elect Joe Biden referred to the sacred rite of confirming a presidential election. The rhetoric conveyed the magnitude of the offense by asserting the sacrality of America’s democratic traditions.

The speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, and her colleague in the Senate, Timothy Kaine, relied on yet a third tradition of sacred words and imagery. Pelosi reminded the House that January 6 was the feast of the Epiphany (the revelation of the divine nature of Jesus to the world), and she prompted her listeners to see the events in D.C. as an epiphany of the true nature of the Trump presidency. As she denounced sedition, she quoted from the famous prayer traditionally ascribed to Francis of Assisi (“Lord, make me a channel of thy peace”) and said a prayer of her own. Kaine spoke later of the need for fellow senators such as Josh Hawley of Missouri to reckon with Jesus’ admonition against selling one’s soul for the sake of worldly gain. Pelosi and Kaine are self-identified Roman Catholics.

During times of crisis, Americans have used religious language because that language conveys a sense of judgment and justice, of pleading and hope, that frames tumultuous events. Our references to the sacred help us to interpret our current situation in relation to transcendent realities and ideals, the disregard for which was all too evident by those who stormed the Capitol and their advocates in the ranks of Congress itself.

TAZEEN M. ALI, Assistant Professor of Religion and Politics

Much of the country watched in horror as a mob of white supremacists attempted to overturn the 2020 election results by storming the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday. Acting at Trump’s behest, these domestic terrorists

From the American Revolution to the Civil War, the Civil Rights movement, and 9/11, Americans have relied on religious language to assert the importance of momentous events.

sought to interrupt the process of certifying Joe Biden’s victory, which they declared had been fraudulent. Throughout the week, many Americans repeatedly expressed different configurations of disbelief and outrage that a coup could be attempted in the United States. Others shared in the sentiments of horror, but not the shock, rightly pointing out that this event was anything but surprising. In the months leading up to the November election, Trump and his key supporters had continuously cast doubt over the integrity of the process and repeated that the only way he could lose the election is if it was stolen from him. In no uncertain terms, he vowed that he would never concede the election. And Trump has stayed true to his word. Last Wednesday’s events follow dozens of post-election lawsuits contesting Biden’s victory, focusing in particular on predominantly Black cities like Philadelphia, Detroit, and Milwaukee, insisting that only “legitimate” (barely veiled code for white) votes should count.

While Trump’s status as a serial liar is well documented, it behooves us to take seriously the ways in which he has been transparent and consistent about his white supremacist agenda. Throughout his presidency, Trump has delivered on his promises to uphold the racist status quo of the United States. Rampant Islamophobia undergirded his 2016 campaign as he called for “a complete and total shutdown” of Muslims entering the country. Many insisted that this was mere hyperbole, that Trump would never act on it. Yet only days into his presidency, he signed an executive order banning entry to foreign

nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries. This would be the first of three “Muslim bans.” Since Islamophobia in the U.S. is a form of anti-Muslim racism rooted in anti-Blackness, it should come as no surprise that this travel ban included a number of African countries with significant Muslim populations. Trump’s immigration policies hearken back to an earlier period in U.S. history when citizenship was tied to whiteness and Christianity: Muslims were barred from naturalization until the mid-twentieth century.

Trump’s incitement of mob violence last week is only the latest event in his thorough commitment to upholding the white supremacist ideals that the U.S. was founded upon. Just the last four years provide sufficient context to overcome our shock and understand exactly how this situation came to be, let alone considering the last four centuries of American history and the enduring legacies of slavery. This was no random angry mob, but a group led and incited by elected officials, further evidenced by Trump’s affectionate words towards them. Moreover, even as Republican Senators Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley “condemned” the mob violence, they still went on to contest the certification of the election results with no sense of irony. We should not linger on Cruz and Hawley’s so-called cognitive dissonance; their halfhearted condemnations of white mob violence were never going to cohere with their attempts to overturn the election results. In other words, we should not focus on their lies, and instead take seriously when they speak their truths. Trump and his allies have

been clear and consistent in their commitment to white supremacy, and we should take them at their word.

We should not understand the resignations of members of Trump’s cabinet, or the institutions that are suddenly distancing themselves from him at this chaotic eleventh hour, as anything more than a farce. We also should not linger on the discrepancy between police attitudes towards peaceful BLM protestors and violent white supremacists. To do so fundamentally misunderstands the history of law enforcement that was established to uphold the racist status quo. This long history will not be undone with the advent of a new administration. But in the meantime, Trump and his enablers should be held to account beyond the end of their terms in office, in order to prevent the possibility that the next coup attempt will be successful.

LEIGH ERIC SCHMIDT, Edward C. Mallinckrodt Distinguished University Professor in the Humanities

In 1973 the acclaimed historian of early modern France, Natalie Zemon Davis, published one of her most enduring essays, “The Rites of Violence,” on the bloody religious riots that recurrently stained Europe’s post-Reformation landscape. A harbinger of the shift toward a cultural history deeply inflected by cultural anthropology, Davis’s essay exhumed the ritualistic patterns that governed otherwise chaotic mobs and fevered rabbles bent on destruction and desecration. Contemporary descriptions of sixteenth-century religious rioters—Protestant

and Catholic—commonly depicted them as disordered, hydra-headed crowds driven “by the appetite of those who stir them up [to] extreme rage, just looking for the chance to carry out any kind of cruelty.” Davis suggested that we needed to look beneath the surface of frenzied tumult and mindless brutality to see the performative prescriptions—the liturgics—of religious violence.

I was reminded of Davis’s essay as Trump’s riotous insurrectionists stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday. It will take a while for us to sort through the video evidence and journalistic reporting to see what role religion and ritual played in these “wild” and seemingly unscripted scenes. We know enough already, though, to recognize many of the religious threads that were woven into these latest rites of violence. We might well start with the religion of the Lost Cause, the huge debt the rioters owe to the palpable devotion to the Confederacy still nurtured in rightwing circles (Trump was yet battling the removal of Confederate names from American military bases days before this rampage). Those Confederate flags waving inside the Capitol building or from its balconies looked like the requital of all those who had so piously tended Southern “heritage” and white supremacy for well over a century.

We would need to turn quickly thereafter to the evangelical Protestant nationalism that has wrapped itself in the Trump flag, to all those who showed up with Bibles in hand as their ritualistic prop of white Christian solidarity (much as Trump did for his photo-op in front of St. John’s Church

We will be facing the challenges raised by the religion-saturated rioting of January 6 for years to come—not only as academics, but also as citizens of a democracy made vulnerable by these latest lords of misrule and those Republican politicians who incited them to overthrow the altars.

The ashes of destruction that remain at the Capitol are not the result of a sudden fire.

last June to dramatize his supposed vanquishing of the Black Lives Matter movement). One rioter carried a Christian flag into the Senate building; another carried a banner that read “Jesus is my savior/Trump is my president”; many sported T-shirts or baseball caps heralding their combined loyalty to “God, Guns, and Trump”; many were zealous to demonize their enemies—from the media to Nancy Pelosi to Mitt Romney—as profaners of their amalgamated deities. All told, the “heavy religious vibe” among those in attendance was impossible to miss, the liturgical pageantry of the rioting all too plain, if not always easy to decipher: What are we to make, for example, of the two celebrants wearing vestments, emblazoned with an image of the Virgin Mary, who were intoning a Catholic blessing over the gathering, while carrying Jewish shofars? It will take scholars with Davis’s gifts for semiotic analysis to fathom our own rites of violence in all their religious complexity and perversity. We will be facing the challenges raised by the religion-saturated rioting of January 6 for years to come—not only as academics, but also as citizens of a democracy made vulnerable by these latest lords of misrule and those Republican politicians who incited them to overthrow the altars.

LERONE A. MARTIN, Associate Professor of Religion and Politics

I write this letter to white evangelical moderates. I write not as an outsider, but as a son of evangelicalism. I am a born-again believer, my faith nurtured in the cradle of white evangelical churches and schools.

As we confront the aftermath of January 6, there is much blame to go around: President Trump, the legion of violent insurrectionists, Senators Joshua Hawley and Ted Cruz, and the list goes on. They have most certainly sown lies and violence, causing us all to reap the same.

Yet, my attention, however, turns to you: The white evangelical moderate who aided and abetted the violence at the Capitol. I do not mean the violent white Christian nationalists; they already stand condemned. Nor do I refer to the white evangelicals who consistently stood for justice and equality. No, I am writing to you, who with loud voices proclaimed from the mountain tops of social media your disgust with Trump, Hawley, and Cruz this past week, but who remained silent during the violence of the past four years.

Your support and silence helped create the insurrection. The ashes of destruction that remain at the Capitol are not the result of a sudden fire. Wednesday was no spontaneous combustion. It was a slow burn, a flame that was fanned by white evangelical affirmations and the even louder silences during the Trump years. Perhaps you feel my criticism is too harsh. But with political power comes moral responsibility. Simply put: to whom much is given, much is required. Yet, the majority of moderate white evangelicals counted the political cost and chose not to bear their cross. In exchange you received your political salvation: lower corporate taxes, pro-life judges, and a renewed sense of cultural power and relevance.

To you I ask: What does it profit a body of believers to gain political appointments and lose its own soul?

As we approach MLK Day, I paraphrase what he said to white Christian moderates in 1963. I have looked at your churches and colleges and asked: “What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of [President Trump] dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when [President Trump] gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary [black] men and women decided to rise . . . to the bright hills of creative protest” against police brutality.

Your silences have spoken volumes, permitting four years of deception. You allowed the sin of bearing false witness to simply become “alternative facts.” You blessed the fount of lies from which sprang “stop the steal.” And any white evangelical who said otherwise was excommunicated, cast into the outer darkness of treason.

Now that the nation’s Capitol lies desecrated, it is in vogue to engage in soul-searching. White evangelicals and Republicans alike have expressed shock and moral outrage with the Trump administration and its coddling of white nationalist violence. Yet none of these statements will divorce you from your history.

I know my disappointment may come across as harsh, but as King said, “there can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love.”

Beloved, if you do not muster the courage to stand against sin on the left AND the right, you will remain, as King noted of the white moderates of his day, “the great stumbling block” towards racial equality and justice. It is not the white Christian nationalists and far-right extremists who present the greatest hurdle, but rather “the white moderate, who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice.” Beloved, if you fail to unHINGE yourself from the chains of conformity, your faith communities and gospel witness will continue to lose authenticity, you will forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be treated as a white nationalist political party masquerading as a church.

I close as King closed his letter to white moderates: If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth, I ask your forgiveness. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates a willingness to settle for anything less than justice and equality, I beg God to forgive me.

LAURIE F. MAFFLY-KIPP, Archer Alexander Distinguished Professor & Interim Dean and Vice Provost for Graduate Education

One of the casualties of the economic downturn spurred by the pandemic has been cutbacks in the academic study of history and society. Numerous colleges and universities, feeling the multiple pressures of parental focus on “practical” training, the rise of majors in the STEM fields, and the need to reduce their budgets, have cut programs in the liberal arts, including foreign languages, history,

Your silences have spoken volumes, permitting four years of deception.

and religious studies. Their arguments are utilitarian: Job markets are shifting, and increasingly students seek an education that will provide a solid basis of employment.

I strenuously disagree with this erosion of the humanities, but my purpose here is not to argue with the calculus employed by students, their parents, and academic administrators. What worries me is this: On January 6, Trump supporters, encouraged by politicians, stormed into the U.S. Capitol, damaging its contents and terrifying its occupants. How are we to make sense of such events without some knowledge of history, critical thinking, and social movements? Or without the reasoning and rhetorical skills provided by philosophy and literature? How do we assess the puzzling mix of Nordic headdress, signs bearing the message “Jesus 2020,” shofars, and “Camp Auschwitz” sweatshirts without knowing something about both the recent and ancient past?

It is those “softer” skills that help us explain, analyze, and (hopefully) work through dark social moments. These are languages that citizens of a democracy must learn. Just as I stare in ignorance at circuit boards, I worry that students, without the ability to decipher complex codes of social knowledge, will shrug in helplessness at political, religious, and cultural events to come. I’ve already heard over the past week repeated phrases uttered in disbelief: “How could we have seen this coming?” or “We’re better than this.”

For those who engage seriously in the study of the liberal arts, January 6 was neither a shock nor an aberration. For people of color, the eruption of white nationalist sentiment wrapped up in a (mostly) Christian package was no surprise. And this is why we all have to know what our country is and has been in the past. This is why I teach about religious achievement and religious conflict in U.S. history and politics.

Our students need this knowledge alongside the more obviously “useful” knowledge gained in business, engineering, or computer science. Without it, they will be caught up short every time by future social challenges—or, worse yet, easily persuaded by any demagogues that come along. The liberal arts are not the optional desserts consumed by a privileged elite; they are the bones and sinew of our body politic that allow our democratic society to exist. We scale them back at our own peril.

FANNIE BIALEK, Assistant Professor of Religion and Politics

What does it mean to feel, and to say, that the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6 was not surprising? From around the time footage of the attack began appearing on television, Twitter was full of people proclaiming their lack of surprise, citing historical precedent in white supremacist violence and fascist movements as well as Trump’s tweets, for weeks, advocating increasingly extra-procedural measures to “stop the steal.” By the evening, the unsurprise had reached mainstream media and I watched even my local news anchors comment that the day

was “shocking, but not surprising.” In the days that have followed, reasons not to be surprised have been piling up: historical reasons and proximate reasons, including the explicit announcements of the action by many participants and political leaders, and their transparent preparations for violence.

The attack was not a surprise. It was planned in the open, it was promoted by the president, and it follows decades of right-wing extremist violence that included in only the last few months an effort to kidnap a sitting governor. To be surprised admits of not having paid attention, or not having understood. It might indicate an overinvestment in fantasies of American exceptionalism, or a privileged and myopic position in a society that has long shown many of its members the possibility of this kind of harm.

The problem with not being surprised—the pain of it—is that surprise would allow us to forgive some failures to have prepared for it, or prevented it. At the beginning of the pandemic, I often felt a version of this relief. The coronavirus was *novel*, as its name reminded us daily; the disruptions were not our fault, the lack of a treatment was not our failure. The work required was to care for each other now and start fighting the threat expediently, for the days ahead. As the failures in this country to be prepared for such a pandemic became more obvious, any sense of relief from responsibility vanished. *This* virus was novel, but the possibility of a pandemic wasn’t. And the mismanagement of the pandemic, from those precious early days, squandered whatever blamelessness novelty might afford.

It is comforting to find horrors surprising because it suggests that you couldn’t have done anything to stop them, since you didn’t even know they could happen. It is also comforting, in some strange sense of comfort, to be surprised because you had done everything you could to prevent them, and their defeat of those efforts is what presents the surprise. The pain of the insurrection on January 6 is compounded by finding little about it surprising, and knowing from that lack of surprise that there was so much that could have been done to keep things from getting to this point.

The right response to this pain cannot be to hope the perpetrators have all learned their lessons, the ones that we who are not surprised already knew. The problem is not what was known and not known—that’s what being unsurprised should teach us. The problem is what was not *done*: the many incidents of domestic terrorism that have been implicitly sanctioned by a lack of response; the repeated incitements to violence by a president and other political leaders that meet sighs instead of censure; the proliferation of guns and militia groups and open domestic terrorist activity that is so rarely addressed by more than shock. Genuine accountability for this attack is necessary. To move on, even to some supposed prevention of future violence, would sanction such violence irreparably. If justice is not done here, the next attack will not be surprising again. We must build a society through accountability and repair in which we can again be surprised.

The pain of the insurrection on January 6 is compounded by finding little about it surprising, and knowing from that lack of surprise that there was so much that could have been done to keep things from getting to this point.

Learn more at: [RAP.WUSTL.EDU/PEOPLE](https://rap.wustl.edu/people)

PEOPLE

A cohort of outstanding scholars and teachers, academic associates, trusted advisors, and talented staff guides the Center's work toward its goals.

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PEOPLE FACULTY

Tazeen M. Ali



Tazeen M. Ali is Assistant Professor of Religion and Politics. Her research and teaching focus on Islam in America, women's religious authority, and Islam, gender, and race. Her book-in-progress *Authorizing Women: Islamic Authority at the Women's Mosque of America* analyzes how American Muslim women negotiate the Islamic tradition to cultivate religious authority and build gender-equitable worship communities.

“As the first Islamic studies faculty member at the Center, I think it's been a privilege to be part of the broader effort in academia and also broader public discourse on helping to shape our understanding of Islam as a legitimate American religion.”

Ali earned her Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Boston University in 2019. She was a visiting postgraduate student in Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh from 2017 to 2018. Prior to that she earned a graduate certificate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Boston University, as well as a master's degree in Islamic Studies from Washington University in St. Louis. She earned her bachelor's degree with honors in both religion and biology from Lehigh University. Competitive fellowships and grants from The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, the Boston University Center for the Humanities, and the Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations at Boston University have supported her writing and research.

PEOPLE FACULTY

Anna F. Bialek



Fannie Bialek is Assistant Professor of Religion and Politics. Her research and teaching focus on contemporary religious ethics and political theory with an emphasis on feminist thought, Christian theology, and modern forms of power critique. Her first book project, *Love in Time*, argues for a consideration of love as a relationship to uncertainty, instructive for the vulnerabilities of interpersonal relationships and political life. She teaches the gateway lecture course for the religion and politics minor, The Good Life between Religion and Politics, among other courses in religious ethics and political thought.

Her appointment with the Danforth Center on Religion and Politics follows her position as Lecturer with the Religious Studies program at Washington University in St. Louis for the 2016-2017 academic year. She was Visiting Assistant Professor in Religious Studies at Brown in 2015-2016.

Bialek earned the Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Brown University in 2016. She earned a bachelor's degree in religion, summa cum laude, from Princeton University. Competitive fellowships from the American Association of University Women, the Cogut Center for the Humanities at Brown, and the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown have offered support for her research.

Bialek is co-editor of *Feminist Religion*. The website serves as a venue for feminist, womanist, mujerista, queer, trans, and intersectional theorists, theologians, and ethicists in religious studies to coordinate and collaborate.

Professor Bialek was on research leave for the 2020-2021 academic year.

“There's something exciting in teaching people to become critical thinkers about their own experiences and questions, and to think about the way they ask questions about how they want to live.”

PEOPLE FACULTY

R. Marie Griffith



R. Marie Griffith, the John C. Danforth Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at Washington University in St. Louis, is currently the director of the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics and the editor of the Center's journal, *Religion & Politics*. Her research focuses on American Christianity, including the changing profile of American evangelicals and ongoing conflicts over gender, sexuality, and marriage.

Professor Griffith obtained her undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia in Political and Social Thought and her Ph.D. in the study of religion from Harvard University. Before moving to Washington University in 2011, she served as professor of religion and director of the women and gender studies program at Princeton University, where she was awarded the President's Award for Distinguished Teaching; and later as the John A. Bartlett Professor of New England Church History at Harvard. In 2015 she was appointed a Distinguished Lecturer for the Organization of American Historians.

"I like to think about the study of religion and politics as being applicable professionally to physicians, to lawyers, to teachers, and, of course, to clergy and other caregivers. Like it or not, the relationship between religion and politics shapes all our lives and affects people across countless vocations."

Griffith is the author or editor of seven books. Her latest book, *Making the World Over: Confronting Racism, Misogyny, and Xenophobia in U.S. History*, urges a re-reading of the nation's history that opens up greater complexity than our stock narratives. Her other books include *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (University of California Press, 1997), *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (University of California Press, 2004), and *Moral Combat: How Sex Divided American Christians and Fractured American Politics* (Basic Books, 2017). These books, along with her three edited volumes—*Women and Religion in the African Diaspora: Knowledge, Power, and Performance* (co-edited with Barbara Dianne Savage, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), *Religion and Politics in the Contemporary United States* (co-edited with Melani McAlister, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), and *American Religions: A Documentary History* (Oxford University Press, 2007)—exhibit Griffith's varied research interests. In addition to her books, Professor Griffith has published numerous scholarly articles, book chapters, and essays.

Griffith is a frequent media commentator and public speaker on current issues pertaining to religion and politics.

PEOPLE FACULTY

John Inazu



John Inazu is the Sally D. Danforth Distinguished Professor of Law and Religion and holds a joint appointment in the Washington University Law School and the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics.

Professor Inazu's scholarship focuses on the First Amendment freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion, and related questions of legal and political theory. His first book, *Liberty's Refuge: The Forgotten Freedom of Assembly* (Yale University Press, 2012), seeks to recover the role of assembly in American political and constitutional thought. His second book, *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving Through Deep Difference* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), looks at legal and civic practices in a pluralistic society. His most recent book is *Uncommon Ground: Living Faithfully in a World of Difference* (Nelson Books, 2020) (co-edited with Tim Keller). Inazu is special editor of a volume on law and theology published in *Law and Contemporary Problems*, and his articles have appeared in a number of law reviews and specialty journals. He has written broadly for mainstream audiences in publications including *USA Today*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Washington Post*.

"WashU is a campus where people take interdisciplinary work seriously and where relationships and conversations happen between people in different disciplines. For me, that's a huge draw of this place that I think is distinctive from a lot of institutions."

Inazu earned his Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and his J.D. and B.S.E. at Duke University. Prior to teaching, he clerked for Judge Roger L. Wollman of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit and served for four years as an associate general counsel with the Department of the Air Force at the Pentagon. From 2014-2015, he was a senior fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. In addition to his academic positions, Inazu is the founder and executive director of The Carver Project (carverstl.org).

PEOPLE FACULTY

Laurie Maffly-Kipp



Laurie Maffly-Kipp is the Archer Alexander Distinguished Professor at the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics. As of July 1, 2020, she also serves as the Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education at Washington University in St. Louis.

Maffly-Kipp's research and teaching focus on African American religions, Mormonism, religion on the Pacific borderlands of the Americas, and issues of intercultural contact. Her publications are many and include: *Religion and Society in Frontier California* (Yale University Press, 1994), where she explored the nature of Protestant spiritual practices in Gold Rush California; articles on Mormon-Protestant conflicts in the Pacific Islands, African-Americans in Haiti and Africa, and Protestant outreach to Chinese immigrants in California; a recent volume of essays entitled *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America, 1630-1965* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) with Leigh Schmidt and Mark Valeri; a co-edited collection of essays about Mormonism in the Pacific World, *Proclamation to the People: Nineteenth-Century Mormonism and the Pacific*

“To get students comfortable talking about things and not necessarily debating them, while really being curious about other people’s points of view, is what I see as the sweet spot of our classes.”

Basin Frontier (University of Utah Press, 2008). Most recently she authored *Setting Down the Sacred Past: African-American Race Histories* (Harvard University Press, 2010); *American Scriptures*, a Penguin Classics anthology of sacred texts (Penguin, 2010); and *Women’s Work*, a co-edited collection of writings by African-American women historians (Oxford University Press, 2010). Currently she is working on a survey of Mormonism in American life that will be published by Basic Books.

Prior to joining the Center, Maffly-Kipp taught for twenty-four years at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Religious Studies and American Studies. She earned her B.A. from Amherst College in English and Religion, summa cum laude, and completed the Ph.D. in American History at Yale University with distinction (1990). She is the recipient of numerous fellowships and grants, including a grant for a collaborative project on the History of Christian Practice from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., fellowships at the National Humanities Center, and an NEH Fellowship for University Professors. Her work in African American religion was honored with the James W.C. Pennington Award from the University of Heidelberg in 2014. Maffly-Kipp is a past president of both the American Society of Church History and the Mormon History Association.

PEOPLE FACULTY

Lerone A. Martin



Lerone A. Martin is Associate Professor in Religion and Politics at the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics. He also serves as Director of the American Culture Studies program 2020-2023.

Martin is the author of the award-winning *Preaching on Wax: The Phonograph and the Making of Modern African American Religion* (New York University Press, 2014), which tracks the role of the phonograph in the shaping of African American religion, culture, and politics during the first half of the twentieth century. The book was the 2015 recipient of the best first book award by the American Society of Church History.

“We need to have a generation of folks who understand the intersection of religion and politics and are willing to talk about these things across disagreements.”

In support of his research, Martin has received a number of nationally recognized fellowships and grants, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, The American Council of Learned Societies, The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, Templeton Religion Trust, and the Louisville Institute for the Study

of American Religion. Most recently, he was awarded a \$1 million grant from the Henry Luce Foundation as Co-Director of “The Crossroads Project,” to advance public understanding of the history, politics, and cultures of African American religions. He also received a \$250,000 grant from The Teagle Foundation to implement an intensive three-week summer humanities seminar for promising, underserved high school students from the St. Louis region enrolled in the university’s College Prep Program.

Martin has also been recognized for his teaching, receiving grants and fellowships from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion. In 2019 he received the WashU Dean of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award, while the students in the College of Arts and Sciences awarded him their Excellence in Teaching Award in Humanities.

Currently he is an instructor at the Missouri Eastern Correctional Center. His commentary and writing have appeared in popular media outlets including The NBC *Today Show*, *PBS*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, and *CNN*.

He is currently writing a book on the relationship between the FBI and white evangelical conservatism. The book is set to be published by Princeton University Press.

PEOPLE FACULTY

Leigh Eric Schmidt



Leigh Eric Schmidt is the Edward C. Mallinckrodt Distinguished University Professor in the Humanities at Washington University in St. Louis. He joined the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics in 2011.

From 2009 to 2011, Schmidt was the Charles Warren Professor of the History of Religion in America at Harvard University; from 1995 to 2009, he taught at Princeton University where he was the Agate Brown and George L. Collord Professor of Religion and served as chair of the Department of Religion; and, from 1989 to 1995, he taught at Drew University. He has held research fellowships at Stanford and Princeton and also through the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Schmidt is the author, most recently, of *The Church of Saint Thomas Paine: A Religious*

“The undergraduates are a truly outstanding group of students. From one week to the next they bring a serious commitment to their studies and to classroom discussions. Encountering that intellectual engagement is one of the really great things about teaching at the Center and at WashU.”

History of American Secularism (Princeton, 2021) and *Village Atheists: How America’s Unbelievers Made Their Way in a Godly Nation* (Princeton, 2016). He is also the author of *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Harvard, 2000), which won the American Academy of Religion Award for Excellence in Historical Studies and the John Hope Franklin Prize of the American Studies Association; *Heaven’s Bride: The Unprintable Life of Ida C. Craddock, American Mystic, Scholar, Sexologist, Martyr, and Madwoman* (Basic, 2010); *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality* (HarperOne, 2005; updated edition University of California, 2012); *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays* (Princeton, 1995); and *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, 1989), which received the Brewer Prize from the American Society of Church History. In addition, Schmidt has served as co-editor with Sally Promey of *American Religious Liberalism* (Indiana, 2012), co-editor with Laurie Maffly-Kipp and Mark Valeri of *Practicing Protestants: Histories of the Christian Life in America* (Johns Hopkins, 2006), and co-author with Edwin Scott Gaustad of *The Religious History of America* (HarperOne, 2002).

Schmidt earned his undergraduate degree in history and religious studies from the University of California, Riverside, in 1983 and his Ph.D. in religion from Princeton in 1987.

PEOPLE FACULTY

Mark Valeri



Mark Valeri is the Reverend Priscilla Wood Neaves Distinguished Professor of Religion and Politics with the Center.

Valeri’s areas of specialization include religion and social thought, especially economics, in America; Reformation theology and the political history of Calvinism; Puritanism; and enlightenment moral philosophy. Valeri came to Washington University from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, where he served as the Ernest Trice Thompson Professor of Church History beginning in 1996. His prior appointment was in the Religious Studies department at Lewis and Clark College.

His book, *Heavenly Merchandise: How Religion Shaped Commerce in Puritan America*, (Princeton University Press, 2010), received the 2011 Philip Schaff Prize from the American Society of Church History. Previous publications include *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy’s New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary America* (Oxford University Press, 1994); *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 17: Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733* (Yale University Press, 1999); *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America, 1630-1965* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), co-edited with Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp and Leigh E. Schmidt; and the co-edited *Global Neighbors: Christian Faith and Moral Obligation in Today’s Economy* (Eerdmans, 2008). His publication list includes many book chapters, journal articles, and essays.

“The most satisfying part of teaching at the Center is when the ‘A-ha’ reaction of students spills over to what seems to me to be genuinely life formative for them.”

Valeri has received several fellowships, including an Andrew W. Mellon fellowship, a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship, an American Council of Learned Societies grant, a Lilly Endowment faculty fellowship, as well as the 2017-2018 *Los Angeles Times* Distinguished Fellowship in the History and Culture of the Americas at The Huntington Library in Pasadena, California.

Valeri earned the Ph.D. from Princeton University, his M.Div. from Yale Divinity School, and his B.A., summa cum laude, from Whitworth College.

He is currently working on religious persuasion, evangelicalism, and secularism in the eighteenth century.

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Courtesy Appointments


CASSIE ADCOCK

Associate Professor of History and South Asian Studies; Associate Professor of Religion and Politics (by courtesy)


ABRAM C. VAN ENGEN

Associate Professor of English; Director of English Graduate Studies; Associate Professor of Religion and Politics (by courtesy); Dean's Fellow for Educational Innovations and Initiatives



Umrah Hall on the Danforth Campus is the home of the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics.

2020-2021 RESEARCH FELLOWS


AMY GAISS

Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and the Interdisciplinary Project in the Humanities at Washington University in St. Louis


JOE BARTZEL

Religion, Spirituality, and Democratic Renewal Fellow with the Social Science Research Council

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Postdoctoral Fellows



CHRISTINA DAVIDSON is an interdisciplinary historian with specializations in Latin American and Caribbean history, African American Studies, and religious history. Her book manuscript, “Converting Hispaniola: Religious Race-Making in the Dominican Americas,” explores diplomatic and cultural relations between the Dominican Republic and the United States in the late nineteenth century. Davidson comes to the Center following a postdoctoral fellowship at the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History at Harvard University. She earned her Ph.D. and master’s degree in History from Duke University and a B.A. from Yale University in Latin American Studies and International Studies.

Davidson will teach the course African-American Religions in fall 2021. She will join the Department of History at the University of Southern California in 2022.



CANDACE LUKASIK is an anthropologist of religion and migration, with a focus on Middle Eastern Christianity, U.S. geopolitics, and Muslim-Christian relations. She earned her Ph.D. in Sociocultural Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley in 2020. Her book manuscript, “Economy of Blood: Coptic Christianity and the Persecution Politics of U.S. Empire,” examines how American politicization of Middle Eastern Christians has impacted inter-communal solidarities and religious alliances, both in the Middle East and in diaspora. Based on twenty months of fieldwork between Egypt and the United States, the book investigates the transformative effects of U.S. empire on a Middle Eastern Christian community in migration and in diaspora by examining the transnational circulation and commingling of American and Coptic political subjectivities and religious practices.

Lukasik taught the course Global Circuits: Religion, Race, Empire in spring 2021.

“Even during the pandemic, my fellow postdocs and I have formed a family of junior scholars that has been incredibly beneficial both personally and professionally.”

CANDACE LUKASIK



ANDREW WALKER-CORNETTA is a scholar of American religion whose research focuses on the making and maintenance of human difference. He earned his Ph.D. from the Department of Religion at Princeton University with a Certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies in 2020. His first book project, “Spiritual Rehabilitation: Religion and Cognitive Disability in Postwar America,” examines the moral construction of cognitive impairment and its relationship to broader questions about social reproduction, kinship, and what it means to be human.

Walker-Cornetta taught the course Religion, Health, and Race in America in spring 2021. He will join the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies at Georgia State University as Assistant Professor in August 2021.

“During a year when I often found myself pining for intellectual community, the Center’s colloquium provided crucial sustenance. I not only benefited from my colleagues’ impressive research but also found a great deal to admire in their commitment to conversation and collaboration across our various projects.”

ANDREW WALKER-CORNETTA



ALEXIA WILLIAMS is an interdisciplinary scholar of religion and racial identity in the hemispheric Americas. She received her Ph.D. in American Studies and African American Studies from Yale University. Her book manuscript, “Black Revolutionary Saints: Roman Catholicism and the U.S. Racial Imagination” examines Black discursive and aesthetic practices of sainthood to understand how a Catholic imaginary of race materializes for public display and consumption in American culture. Inspired by the genre “lives of saints” writing, Williams analyzes how stories about African American candidates for sainthood are told, and the local histories of race, gender, and migration that emerge from them.

Williams taught the course Religion and Music in American Culture in spring 2021. She will join the faculty of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign as an Assistant Professor of Religion and African American Studies, beginning in fall 2021.

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Staff



SANDY JONES is the Center's Event Coordinator. She comes to Washington University after serving as Community Relations and Events Coordinator at a local

nonprofit organization and brings several years of event management experience to her role. She earned her B.A. in Communications and Theatre Arts from California Lutheran University.



DEBRA KENNARD serves as Assistant Director with responsibility for multiple Center operations including communications and publicity, events, donor

relationship support, and staff management. She brings experience from several advertising and communications positions at J. Walter Thompson and GE Capital, as well as varied community volunteer work. Currently she serves on the board of The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis. She earned her B.A. in journalism from Indiana University and her M.A. in nonprofit management from Washington University in St. Louis.



SHERI PEÑA is the Center's Administrative Coordinator, managing financial operations, office administration, course coordination, and a variety of other support functions.

She has over 20 years of broad administrative experience leading front and back office operations including executive support, human resources and payroll coordination, financial processing, and meeting planning. She earned her A.A. at Washington University in St. Louis and is currently pursuing her B.A.



TIFFANY STANLEY is Managing Editor of *Religion & Politics*, the John C. Danforth Center's online journal. She brings a strong background in the journalism and

publishing world, as well as in religion and politics. Prior to coming the Center, she worked for *The New Republic*, *Harvard Magazine*, and Religion News Service. Her articles on religion and politics have appeared in, among other publications, *USA Today*, *The Daily Beast*, *The Christian Century*, and *The Salt Lake*

Tribune. She holds a B.A. in journalism and a B.A. in English from the University of Georgia, in addition to a Master of Divinity from Harvard University.



GWYNE HENKE joined the Center as a part-time assistant event coordinator for the fall semester. She graduated summa cum laude from Washington University in St. Louis

with a major in Religious Studies and a minor in Writing in 2020.

2020-2021 STUDENT ASSISTANTS

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“The Center has a superb staff of outstanding professionals who make the Center's public programming, undergraduate teaching, communications, and day-to-day administration function at a very high level of efficiency and excellence.”

PROF. LEIGH SCHMIDT

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This group of distinguished representatives from the fields of American religion, politics, education, law, journalism, and business helps the Center have the greatest possible impact on current discussions relating to religion's long role in U.S. politics.

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The John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics owes its existence to the tremendous generosity of the Danforth Foundation, founded in 1927 by Mr. and Mrs. William H. Danforth. The Foundation's commitment to funding St. Louis-based initiatives is well known, and in 2009 it announced a major gift of \$30 million to Washington University to establish the Center. John C. Danforth, former Senator from Missouri and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, was particularly engaged in the Center's founding and remains a member of its national advisory board. This gift reflects Sen. Danforth's specific interest in religion and politics, as well as his dedication to his city, state, and nation. Center Director Marie Griffith holds the John C. Danforth Distinguished University Professorship that was established as a part of this generous founding gift.

SEN. JOHN C. DANFORTH AND MRS. SALLY D. DANFORTH



Sen. Danforth established in 2016 a distinguished professorship to honor his wife, Sally Dobson Danforth, and the important role she has played in his life and the lives of their children. Sen. Danforth is a retired politician and Episcopal priest, a partner with Dowd Bennett LLP in St. Louis, and an active member of the Center's national advisory board. John Inazu was installed in September 2016 as the inaugural holder of this professorship, which is a joint appointment between the Washington University Law School and the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics.

"I'm very grateful to Senator Danforth and also to the late William Danforth for their vision in creating the Center with funding from the Danforth Foundation. It was a very cogent vision of trying to educate students and the broader public about the relationship between religion and politics in a deep historical as well as a contemporary way."

MARIE GRIFFITH

DR. WILLIAM B. NEAVES AND THE REV. PRISCILLA WOOD NEAVES



In the fall of 2012, William B. Neaves, an emeritus trustee at Washington University in St. Louis, established a professorship in the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics in honor of his wife, Priscilla Wood Neaves. The Rev. Mrs. Neaves was a former Methodist minister with a personal interest in the role of gender in religion and politics. In addition to this generous gift to the Danforth Center, the couple donated Wood Neaves's library containing books on gender and religion to Washington University's Olin Library.

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Looking Forward

We at the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics look forward to another year of deepened learning about religion and public life in the U.S. through welcoming new students, colleagues, and community members.

FALL 2021 COURSES

Scriptures and Cultural Traditions: Texts and Traditions

Laurie Maffly-Kipp and Mark Valeri

This course will work to define the concept of "Scriptures" and their treatment in U.S. society and culture.

The Good Life between Religion and Politics

Fannie Bialek

This course considers the way religious and political thought has shaped considerations of the classical ethical question of how we should live.

African-American Religions

Christina Davidson

This course is an introduction to African-American religions.

American Religion, Gender, and Sexuality

Marie Griffith

This course explores the centrality of gender debates to religion and politics in the U.S.

Conscience and Religion in American Politics

Amy Gais

By considering what conscience means and what vision of politics it implies, we will reflect on what it means to be American.

Law, Religion, and Politics

John Inazu

This course will explore the role of religious argument in politics and law through the work of legal scholars, theologians, and political theorists.

Spiritual but Not Religious:

The Politics of American Spirituality

Leigh Eric Schmidt

This seminar focuses on the formation of "spirituality" in American culture from the Transcendentalist world of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman on through more recent expressions of the "spiritual-but-not-religious" sensibility.

“*The reason I’m a minor in religion and politics is because once I started, I wanted to keep taking the Center’s classes! The professors are kind, the classes are fantastic, and it became without a doubt one of the best parts of my WashU experience.*”

LYDIA NICKELS, CLASS OF 2021



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