The outgrowth of a partnership between Carleton College and Faribault students, faculty and school administrators, the exhibit-in-progress—Hearing the Voices: Celebrating Diversity at Faribault High School—includes the perspectives that Faribault students shared with Carleton students as they talked about what matters to them: their families, their religious—and non-religious—beliefs, their relationships to friends, their sense of Faribault, their hopes for the future.

Rather than focus on the tensions that divide us, the exhibit asks that we appreciate the diversity and range of perspectives that we find in Faribault. Located in the high school, Hearing the Voices is not open to the general public, but we hope to find ways to share it with the larger community at some point in the near future. The exhibit opened for the school community on May 28, 2013.

What is clear from simply listening to the students, over the course of just a few weeks, is that the tremendous diversity found in Faribault truly reflects the shifts we find in our state at large and from hearing what our students have to say all of us can learn a tremendous amount. Always poised to highlight controversies, this exhibit gives voice to conversation and collaboration rather than conflict.

Carleton students worked very hard to put together this wonderful exhibition, and while it is not viewable on campus this term, we hope to make it accessible to a larger public both online and in a show at Carleton next year.

**Carleton Student Exhibit Curators:** Lauren Alexander, Leah Eby, Ross Jennings, Kassie Maxeiner, Zuki Ragde, Natalie Reinhart, Nathaniel VanWienen, Debbie Wong and Chloe Zelkha. Visit the Religion Department website soon to see more of this wonderful initiative between the communities.
**Spring Events in the Religion Department...**

**Ela Gandhi — “The Challenges Facing Post-Apartheid South Africa”**

On May 8th, Carleton welcomed to campus Ela Gandhi, a peace activist whose involvement in nonviolent political change in South Africa began at the age of twelve. Having witnessed the liberation of India in 1947 and spent three months living with her grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi, she returned to South Africa to lead an activist career of numerous accomplishments. These ranged from participation in the Defiance Campaign marches of the liberation movement, to social work in the black townships and Indian communities, to a decade of service in the South African parliament following Apartheid, to the development of a 24-hour program against domestic violence. Her visit was especially timely for students from Roger Jackson’s spring term class on Gandhi, who joined hundreds of students, faculty, staff and community members to attend her lecture.

**2013 Lindesmith Lectureship on May 9**

**Donald S. Lopez, Jr.**

**Arthur E. Link Distinguished University Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies, Dept. Chair**

**University of Michigan**

Professor Lopez visited several classes while on campus. He also gave a brown bag seminar titled “In Search of the Christian Buddha and a public lecture in the evening titled “A Buddhist Imagines Islam: Gendün Chöpel in India.” which were very well attended.

**2013 Forkosh Lecture in Judaic Studies**

**Naomi Seidman**

**Director of the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies and Koret Professor of Jewish Studies**

**Graduate Theological Union - Berkeley, CA**

We welcomed Professor Naomi Seidman to Carleton from February 26-28th, as this year’s Forkosh Family Lecturer in Judaic Studies. Professor Seidman gave two very well-attended lectures, one at Carleton and the other at St. Olaf, taught a faculty seminar, visited classes and had informal meals with students. Her lectures were engaging and pushed us to rethink how secularizing processes in the late 18th and 19th centuries worked through various forms, such as fiction, Biblical translation and the development of new pedagogic institutions, to educate about and cultivate new Jewish heterosexual and gendered norms and ideals, which countered and challenged, among other things, the homosocial and sexual norms found in the "traditional" religious world. Students reflected about how she made them see revolution even in tradition.

Her lecture at Carleton was titled: “The Marriage Plot: Sexuality, Secularization and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Literature”. This talk explored how secularizing processes in the late 18th and 19th centuries worked through art forms, such as fiction, to educate about and cultivate new Jewish heterosexual norms and ideals, which countered and challenged, among other things, homosocial and sexual norms in the “traditional” religious world.
I will start with a definition—or perhaps it’s more a characterization—by the noted Jewish theologian Jon Stewart: “Religion: It’s a powerful healing force in a world torn apart by… religion.” This shows both the importance and the ambiguity of religion. Religion is a double-edged sword, and some think that because of that humanity is better off without it. Since I’m concerned with the value of religion studies rather than religion itself, I won’t argue that point here. What I will argue is that—whatever its truth or goodness—religion is inescapable and important.

With the rise of science, religion was supposed to disappear, yet it did not. The reason religion has not disappeared and will not disappear is that we are transient, limited, anxious creatures who understand—and instinctively seek to transcend—our limitations. As Albert Camus observes, “men die, and they are not happy.” Or, as the Buddha’s first noble truth has it, “there is suffering.” Clifford Geertz observes that “there are at least three points where chaos … threatens to break in upon man: at the limits of his analytic capacities, at the limits of his powers of endurance, and at the limits of his moral insight.”

At such existential points, it is above all, religion—with its array of stories, doctrines, symbols, images, songs, rituals, feasts, ethical and social teachings, and psychological insights, with its willingness to question convention, probe beyond the finite, and articulate the deepest values—that provides cognitive and affective means for humans to construct (or perhaps discover) meaning where there seems to be none.

Paul Tillich puts this idea more positively; he says religion is best understood as the element of human life focused on “ultimate concern”—the preoccupation with that which is believed to be most real, true, meaningful, abiding, and profoundly motivating. Sometimes this is called “God” or “Brahman” or “Buddha” or “Dao,” or just “the gods,” but it is deeper than any single conception, and indeed cannot be captured by any single symbol. Whether there really is some thing or things that correspond to any of these notions is a moot point; the key is that people have thought, spoken, and acted as if there were, and—however elusive the ultimate with which they have concerned themselves—what religious people have thought, said, and done has shaped and shaken human history, and will continue to do so.

Religion studies is not a single discipline so much as an interdisciplinary field. It begins, necessarily, with the perspectives, words, and acts of religious people, but seeks to understand these through the methods of such disciplines as philosophy, history, literary studies, art, music, sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology—and even evolutionary biology and cognitive science.

The unifying factor here is that each of these disciplines is brought to bear on humans’ various ways of expressing their ultimate concerns in response to the existential limitations that afflict our species.

Wendy Doniger refers to the “tool-box” of methods available to scholars of religion, from which they draw one or more perspective on their topic, as demanded by the job. In some cases a psychological approach may be most effective, while in others the perspective of sociology may be needed. More often, we will want to apply multiple methods—precisely because the fully human simply cannot be comprehended by a single, one-tool-fits-all approach.

In short, studying religion allows us to penetrate into the deepest recesses of the human life-world using the broadest possible range of investigative techniques, giving it a unique perspective on a species that—the science and secularism notwithstanding—will forever remain homo religiousus.

Roger Jackson
John W. Nason Professor of Asian Studies and Religion
Coordinator of South Asian Studies
ANNE PATRICK, WILLIAM H. LAIRD PROFESSOR OF RELIGION AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

From the forward of Anne Patrick’s forthcoming book, *Conscience and Calling: Reflections on Catholic Women’s Church Vocations* (Bloomsbury Academic) “As this book was nearing publication Pope Benedict XVI surprised the world by announcing his retirement from the Petrine office, effective 28 February 2013. The College of Cardinals also made history by electing the church’s first pope from the southern hemisphere. On 13 March Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio of Buenos Aires assumed the papal ministry and took the name “Pope Francis,” thereby showing his desire to emulate the saint who had been called by God to “repair my church.” One hopes now that the reforms he seeks to achieve and the evangelical Catholicism he is inclined to promote will mean truly good news for women, especially those who are poor and marginalized.”.

BARDWELL SMITH, JOHN W. NASON PROFESSOR OF RELIGION AND ASIAN STUDIES

*Narratives of sorrow and dignity: Japanese women, pregnancy loss, and modern rituals of grieving* (Oxford University Press) “Bardwell L. Smith offers a fresh perspective on *mizuko kuyo*, the Japanese ceremony performed to bring solace to those who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion. Showing how old and new forms of myth, symbol, doctrine, praxis, and organization combine and overlap in contemporary *mizuko kuyo*, Smith provides critical insight from many angles: the sociology of the family, the power of the medical profession, the economics of temples, the import of ancestral connections, the need for healing in both private and communal ways and, perhaps above all, the place of women in modern Japanese religion.

At the heart of Smith’s research is the issue of how human beings experience the death of a life that has been and remains precious to them. While universal, these losses are also personal and unique. The role of society in helping people to heal from these experiences varies widely and has changed enormously in recent decades. In examples of grieving for these kinds of losses one finds narratives not only of deep sorrow but of remarkable dignity.”
**INTRODUCING...**

**PROFESSOR KATIE BRINK**

**Nume News (NN):** Tell me about yourself, and how you became interested in the study of religion.

**Katie Brink:** I grew up at the intersection of St. Paul’s suburbia and the farmland beyond it, on a tiny, Arabian horse farm. I went away for grad school, but am back in St. Paul—this time in the city—where I live with my husband and three-year-old daughter. I became interested in religious studies when I took a world religions class at my public high school. My high school teacher had spent three years in Bahrain and had so many great Islam stories that we ran out of time for Judaism. I loved the class and decided to fix its deficit when I got to college, and it just sort of spiraled from there. By the end of my junior year I realized I was one class away from a religion major, and soon thereafter gave up my idea of being a set designer for stage theater in favor of graduate school in biblical studies.

**NN:** What interests you most about the study of religion?

**KB:** I first fell in love with religious studies because it provided many of the same thrills as traveling to a foreign country without having to leave home. I love trying to imagine the world from other people’s point of view. The more remote from my own worldview, the happier I am. I also love the challenge of a good puzzle, and the Hebrew Bible is full of puzzles—challenging ones that are 2000-3000 years old and require me to dip into various fields of study while juggling several dead languages. I’ll never be bored with it.

**NN:** What is your favorite topic to discuss with students?

**KB:** I feed off of my students’ excitement. Usually, if a student is excited about something, then I am. Especially if neither of us understands the topic and are exploring possibilities at the same time. Also, I must admit that I like controversy. I tend to march straight toward the most controversial parts of the Hebrew Bible in my classes.

**NN:** How do you like Carleton?

**KB:** Carleton is fantastic. My students are a lot of fun, the Religion department is full of friendly people, and Carleton’s support services for faculty and students seem more thoughtfully designed and extensive than many of the other places where I have taught and studied. Plus, there’s a house where students gather and bake cookies? There’s a regal bronze statue in loving memory of the Gould Library’s former cat? Who wouldn’t love this place?

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**Hindu Milan Mandir - Eagan, MN**

Shana Sippy’s Religion 256 Modern Hinduism & Public Hindus & Hinduism class visited Guyanese Hindu Temple and met Satya Balroop, the founder of the Minnesota Hindu Milan Mandir. (Winter 2013)

**Chua Phat An Vietnamese Buddhist Temple - Roseville, MN**

Shana Sippy’s Religion 289 Global Religions in MN class visited this temple as part of the celebration of the birth of the Buddha. The class also visited five different religious communities to observe worship.
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2013 SENIORS COMPS TALKS

Lauren Alexander  
Talk of Rites & Talk of Rights: Circumcision, Freedom, and the Difficulty of Human Rights Discourse

Joe Concannon  
The Postmodern Re-formation: Mark C. Taylor and the Poetics of A/theology

Brooke Granowski  
Wholly Other, Other Holies: Rudolf Otto’s Religious Pluralism in Conversation with Contemporary Religious Studies Criticism

Henry Neuwirth  
Reliving Toussaint: Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s Historical Dialectic

Arju Nishimura  
A Kaleidoscope of Liliths: The World’s First Woman and Her Dance with Tradition

Katie Powell  
A Radically Traditional Approach: Using Dorothy Day & the Mystical Body of Christ to Redefine Tradition

Danny Ulman  
“Patrilineal Descent” and the Sea Change that wasn’t: An Exploration of its Intricacies, Implications, & Legacy

Djallal Yahia  
Take Another Little Piece of My Heart: Leo Tolstoy and Christian Anarchism

Chloe Zelkha  
The Space Between: Bridging Difference and Oneness in Jewish Theology