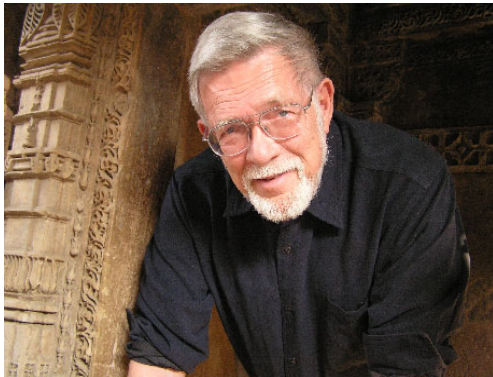


# Religious Studies Notebook

*Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University*



## **A Fond Farewell to a Remarkable Colleague and Professor: Dr. Stanley Burgess**

*Professor Burgess was a gifted teacher. He was the head of the Religious Studies Department in 1982 when the B.A. program was approved, and a key to the early success of the new M.A. program, instituted in 1994.*

In 2004, Dr. Stanley Burgess retired from the Religious Studies Department at Missouri State University after twenty-eight years of service. Dr. Burgess originally began his career at (Southwest) Missouri State in the History Department. He recalls: “My major field on the Ph.D. was in Renaissance-Reformation history, which clearly set the stage for a career in Religious Studies. Dr. Gerrit J. tenZythoff, founder of the Religious Studies Department, recruited me into Religious Studies after I was hired by the MSU History Department (1977). The move into RS was a very natural and welcomed one.”

Dr. Burgess was influential across the University in the early days of the department. “In my early years at MSU I developed the Office of Grants (Now the Sponsored Research Office) and the Handicapped Student Program. I also served in the office of the Provost on a variety of campus-wide projects. In 1982 I became Department Head in RS, but stepped down in 1985 to devote more time to research and publishing. (I now have thirteen books completed or due to be completed in the next two years). One of my most satisfying experiences was to help develop both the B.A. and M.A. in Religious Studies, and to be the first Graduate Student Advisor for the M.A.”

Dr. Burgess taught a variety of courses over the years, including Christianity, Eastern Christianity, and Fundamentalism. Undergraduate students knew him best from “The Literature and World of the Old Testament,” a course which he often taught to large sections.

Ruth, Dr. Burgess’ wife, was also a professor at (Southwest) Missouri State University until 2004. “My wife, Dr. Ruth Burgess and I enjoyed 45 years of professional service in the Springfield area. Among our greatest joys was to mentor students in programs involving cognitive modifiability and instrumental enrichment—skills gained from my wife’s studies in Israel with Professor Reuven Feuerstein, the world-renowned cognitive psychologist. I thoroughly enjoyed the hundreds of opportunities to speak at area churches and colleges, making life-long friends in the process. Of course, one of my richest experiences has been to see my graduate students emerge as promising and recognized scholars.”

When asked about his retirement from the University in 2004, Dr. Burgess fondly recalled: “At the conclusion of my 28th year at MSU I retired. This was a time of celebration, attended by both faculty and friends. Perhaps most meaningful to me was a remembrance book written by those close to me. Subsequently, I accepted a position in Virginia at Regent University as Distinguished Professor of Christian History. This has allowed me to work strictly with doctoral students coming from all parts of the world. It also has allowed me more opportunity to write and publish, and to devote more time to my family.”

A graduate scholarship fund has been created by the friends and colleagues of Stanley Burgess. We hope that you will continue the legacy of Dr. Burgess by supporting this scholarship with a gift. Checks can be sent to the MSU Foundation with a designation for the Burgess Scholarship, or given online at: <https://www.ws.missouristate.edu/giving/pledge3.asp?sub=47>



## A Pioneer in the Department

Lora Hobbs has been a full time lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies 1997. She earned her B.E.S. degree in Educational and Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1986, and her M.A. in Religious Studies at (Southwest) Missouri State University in 2002.

Lora originally earned scholarships in Engineering and Math, but somewhere along the way she heard the call to teach and made a temporary step into Math Education, and then a final leap from the sciences to the humanities. Lora has traveled extensively overseas. She has worked in the Czech Republic, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Mexico, France, Brazil, London, Kenya, Zanzibar, Tanzania, and Honduras. (Okay, Brazil was all fun and no work!). She annually travels to Haiti, often with a group of students and friends in tow, to provide services for a school on the north coast of Haiti that one of her best friends from MU began.

It was a campus ministry position which had originally brought Lora to Springfield. She worked with the College Ministry from 1986-1997. She also took on the role of a per course instructor for the Religious Studies Department from 1988-1997, and then was offered a full time lecturer position in the department. Along the way, Lora completed an M.A. in Religious Studies at the University. "I have always been interested in religion, spirituality, and human behavior. I enjoy teaching and I like working with college students. Missouri State intersects all of these interests."

When asked about the Religious Studies Program at Missouri State, Lora commented on the strengths of the faculty and their consistently good reputation and rapport with the students: "At a public university that's what we are here for...the students." She points out that the main emphasis on the Public Affairs Mission of the University is "to produce educated persons." She feels that the Religious Studies Department plays a significant role in this Mission. Citing the 1963 Supreme Court decision (Abington v. Schempp) which states that a student's education is not complete without the study of religion, Lora contends: "Religion is a major part of public life." She adds that Dr. Kaiser was fond of saying, "Who we are as people is as important as what we do," and she finds that any humanities education allows students the opportunity to clarify who they are in conjunction with training for future career goals.

Dr. Moyer fondly refers to Lora as a "pioneer" in the field of Religious Studies telecourses. She was the first instructor in the department to instruct a course through the medium of television. Up until that time (2003), professors who offered telecourses were filmed in their classroom settings, but Lora would be the first to "teach" the television course in a studio setting. "I was their guinea pig," she grins. Although Lora has found that telecourses are not as effective as a physical classroom setting (grades in telecourses are consistently lower than in actual classroom based courses), she contends that there is a

specific place in the educational system filled by telecourses. Certain situations, such as distant learning, for those who cannot easily access the college campus and adult education, for those already established in careers and seeking more education, gain an advantage through the telecourse option.

Outside the academic realm, Lora, who was a Future Farmer of America and received the Illinois State Farmer award (the first woman from her high school), maintains a small hobby farm southwest of Springfield. She has two Fox Trotters and several South African Boer meat goats, as well as her faithful Golden Retriever companion, Roscoe.



She explained that goat meat is the most widely used type of meat in the world, and that there is a high demand for goat meat in the United States, yet the U.S. imports the vast majority of its goat meat from New Zealand and

Australia. Lora does not intend to enter the market as a major supplier of goat meat, but instead only hopes to offset the costs of her horse habit and trail riding adventures with the money she accrues from the sale of her goats.

Currently Miss Hobbs' courses include, Introduction to Religion (REL 100), Religion in the News (REL 200), and Women and Religion (REL 370).

## New Faculty

*Several new faculty members have joined the Religious Studies Department since our last newsletter in 2000 and they are introduced in the following pages. We are enjoying getting to know them and hope our readers will too as they bring to Missouri State University new energy and new insights into the field of Religious Studies. Most of the current full-time faculty are pictured below.*





# Introducing the Blanche Gorman Strong Endowed Chair in Protestant Studies

*Religion has played a major role for the Strong family, across the generations. In particular, it was central to my mother's value system, and guided how she raised my brother and I. It was only natural then, as our family started to look at a gift to the University, to look at a gift to the Department of Religious Studies, and to name it after my mother. And we just couldn't be happier now that Dr. Schmalzbauer is in place as the recipient of the chair. I have had the privilege of sitting in on some of his classes and am very impressed. He has done so much already in taking the abstract idea of a chair and transforming it into a concrete contribution to students, the academic climate at Missouri State, and to the broader community as well.* - Tom Strong



The Strong Family made a generous gift to the University in 2003, which included the Blanche Gorman Strong Endowed Chair in Protestant Studies. This is one of the few Protestant Studies chairs anywhere in the country and the first endowed chair in the Department of Religious Studies. Dr. John Schmalzbauer has already proven himself to be an outstanding teacher and an extremely knowledgeable scholar of religion in the Ozarks.

Dr. Schmalzbauer joined the Religious Studies faculty as an Associate Professor in 2004. Before coming to Springfield, Missouri, he was an Assistant Professor and Edward Bennett Williams Fellow in Catholic Studies in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the College of the Holy Cross.

Dr. Schmalzbauer has been the recipient of numerous grants and contracts for his research. Recently, he was awarded a \$116,000 contract with the University of Northern Iowa for his work on the National Study of Campus Ministries, an extensive three-year project funded by the Lilly Endowment. Together with project director Betty DeBerg of the University of Northern Iowa, Dr. Schmalzbauer is studying four types of campus ministries: chaplaincy programs at church-related private colleges; denominational campus ministries at state-funded schools; nondenominational organizations; and congregation-based ministry programs.

So far Schmalzbauer and DeBerg have conducted telephone interviews of over 60 chaplains and site visits to a half-dozen campuses. They are currently preparing a web survey to be administered to several thousand campus ministers and chaplains.

**Interviewer:** What are your primary research topics and interests?

**Dr. Schmalzbauer:** My first book explored the influence of

religious convictions on the careers of journalists and professors. Currently, I am involved in two projects on religion in higher education. The first is a book with Kathleen Mahoney on the comeback of religion in American colleges and universities. We're tentatively calling it *The Post-Secular Academy: The Return of Religion in American Higher Education*. We have found an increased interest in religion in virtually every academic discipline, as well as a growing participation of students in campus religious life. The other project is the national campus ministry study with Betty DeBerg, which has taken us all over the country.

One of my primary teaching interests is religion in America, particularly evangelical Christians and their role in the Bible Belt. Springfield is fascinating because of the presence of evangelical groups such as the Assemblies of God, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Baptist Bible Fellowship. After completion of the campus ministry project, I would like to conduct a study of religion in the Ozarks. This area intrigues me because of its booming mega-churches, red state politics, and rich traditions of religious popular music (from country to Southern Gospel to shaped note singing).

**Interviewer:** What were some of your expectations and first impressions of Missouri State University students?

**Dr. Schmalzbauer:** Missouri State students come from a much wider range of life experiences than the students I taught at a Catholic liberal arts college. We have a significant number of students who fall outside the 18-22 age bracket. Many more students work. Many have family obligations. These commitments give them a different perspective, one that I very much value. I admire the ability of MSU students to balance work, family, and school. Missouri State students run the gamut in their academic abilities. Many are quite good. Some are superb. Every once in a while, I'll read the work of one of my students and think, I could never have written this at that age.

**Interviewer:** What are some of your thoughts with regard to the faculty of the Religious Studies Department at Missouri State?

**Dr. Schmalzbauer:** This is a fantastic religious studies department. Our faculty hold degrees from some of America's leading universities. What is more, they are a nice group of people.

**Interviewer:** What is the significance of the Public Affairs Mission at Missouri State University and does it pertain to the Religious Studies program here?

**Dr. Schmalzbauer:** You cannot understand American civic life and politics without understanding religion. I feel like I am performing my civic duty every time I step into a classroom and teach about religion in American culture.

To learn more about Dr. John Schmalzbauer, you may visit his University web page at <http://www.faculty.missouristate.edu/j/jas714f.htm>. Current courses available with Dr. Schmalzbauer are: Religion, Media, and Popular Culture (REL 530) and Religion in America (REL 131).

## New Faculty (continued)

### Dr. Austra Reinis



Dr. Austra Reinis joined the faculty of the Religious Studies Department in the Fall of 2004. She had previously held two academic positions internationally, having served as Assistant Professor of Church History at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon, as well as Lecturer at the Theological Faculty of the University of Latvia.

Having received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Accounting from the University of California Berkeley (1980), Dr. Reinis later obtained a Master of Arts degree in the Latvian Language from the University of Stockholm (1984), and a Master of Divinity degree from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA (1990). After serving as an ordained pastor at Uzava and Piltene Lutheran Parishes in Latvia for four years, Dr. Reinis attended Princeton Theological Seminary and received her Ph.D. in Church History (2002).

Dr. Reinis has been awarded numerous scholarships and fellowships, such as the Herzog August Bibliothek Summer Stipend in Wolfenbuttel, Germany (2004 and 2005), and a Doctoral Fellowship from Princeton Theological Seminary (1997-2000; 2001-2002).

Here teaching and research interests include: History of Christianity; Protestant and Catholic Reformations; Theology of Luther; Medieval and Reformation Popular Piety; Women in Christian History; History of Death and Dying; Preaching in Lutheran Orthodoxy. The latest focus of Dr. Reinis' research has progressed in time from the early sixteenth century to the late sixteenth century, as she is currently writing a book on a late sixteenth-century Lutheran preacher, Aegidius Hunnius.

**Interviewer:** Based on your experience with diverse cultures throughout your academic career as both a university student and an instructor, how do university students compare internationally?

**Dr. Reinis:** I have found that socio-economic, political, and overall cultural factors contribute substantially to a student's dedication/determination to take an active role in his/her own education. For instance, having taught in the University of Latvia, just a few years after the fall of the iron curtain, I found students to be very committed to their studies and respectful of their instructors. In the Western world, higher education to a certain degree seems to be taken for granted and studies are often taken less seriously.

**Interviewer:** What were some of your expectations and first impressions of Missouri State University?

**Dr. Reinis:** When my time at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon, began to near its end, I

applied for a total of eighteen positions open worldwide, and ended up coming to Springfield, MO. I found Springfield to be much more welcoming than I had thought it would be. It is a much more homogenous society than I have become accustomed to, but it has proved to be a very inviting, as well as a comfortable environment in which to live and work.

**Interviewer:** In your opinion, what is the significance of the Public Affairs mission at Missouri State University and how does it relate to the Religious Studies program at the University?

**Dr. Reinis:** Religion and politics continue to be closely intertwined in the modern world. Religious Studies courses familiarize students with the religious dimensions of political issues and enable students to make informed judgments on such issues.

**Interviewer:** What are some of your thoughts with regard to the faculty of the Religious Studies Department at Missouri State?

**Dr. Reinis:** I am impressed with the quality of my colleagues' publications and with their ability to obtain funds for travel and research. At the same time I am delighted that dedication to research in our department goes hand in hand with commitment to collegiality. We help each other with abundant encouragement, references to literature, questions, and suggestions.

**Interviewer:** What were the most significant influences in your life, which led you to an academic career in Religious Studies?

**Dr. Reinis:** There was an American Pastor at the University in Stockholm, Sweden, who introduced me to the historical-critical method of Biblical Studies. This intellectual discovery led me to the Master of Divinity Program at Princeton Theological Seminary. As far as teaching at the University level, when I was an ordained pastor in Latvia, I was asked to teach a course at the University of Latvia. I enjoyed the teaching so much that I decided to pursue a Ph.D. and to teach at the University level.

To learn more about Dr. Austra Reinis, you may visit her University web page at <http://www.faculty.missouristate.edu/a/aur767f>. In the fall semester, she will be teaching Introduction to Religion (REL 100), and Christianity (REL 340).

#### *First Annual Religious Studies Alumni Potluck*

Mark your calendars! Save the date!

Saturday, Oct. 28, 2006 following the Missouri State Homecoming Football game.

All alumni, emeritus faculty, majors, graduate students, faculty and families are invited.

Details will follow. Questions may be addressed to the Administrative Secretary:

JoAnneBrown@missouristate.edu

## New Faculty (Continued)

### Dr. Leslie Baynes



Dr. Leslie Baynes joined the faculty of the Religious Studies Department in the fall of 2005. She earned her B.A. in English, with a minor in Theology (1986), as well as her M.A. in Theological Studies (1995) from the University of Dayton, Ohio. She earned her Ph.D. in Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana in 2005.

Prior to her Assistant Professorship at Missouri State University, Dr. Baynes was an instructor at the University of Notre Dame from 2002-2004, as well as visiting Assistant Professor of Theology at the same university in 2004-2005. During the 1980's, Dr. Baynes was involved with an evangelical mission in Haiti. She taught basic literacy in Haitian Creole to a women's sewing cooperative in the village of Montrouis, and she was the 'ghost' writer of a book entitled *Riches* for Bette Snyder, the leader of the mission. She would like to return to Haiti when the political situation becomes more stable.

Her major research interests include apocalyptic literature, Second Temple Judaism "as a whole," the New Testament and early Church history, and the idea of "heavenly book," which was the focus of her dissertation. The dissertation, "'My Life is Written Before You': The Function of the Motif 'Heavenly Book' in Judeo-Christian Apocalypses 200 B.C.E. – 200 C.E.," traces the idea of how God's written register plays a role in almost every apocalyptic book in early Judaism and Christianity. In the spring of 2006 Dr. Baynes taught New Testament (REL 102) and Dead Sea Scrolls (REL 397), and in the fall semester she will be teaching New Testament and Jewish/Christian Apocalypses (REL 641).

**Interviewer:** What were some of your first impressions of Missouri State University, and how do students here compare to the students at the University of Notre Dame?

**Dr. Baynes:** Missouri State represents my first experience teaching at a state university. At Notre Dame, the student body is 85% Catholic, so it is a very homogenous academic community. At Missouri State, the majority of students are Protestant, but of various denominations. I teach biblical studies in the same way at both private and state universities, because the content is the same, and the historical-critical method is used at both places. I have found the students and the Springfield community to be friendly, inviting and warm. This is a very nice community.

**Interviewer:** In your opinion, what is the significance of the Public Affairs mission at Missouri State University and how

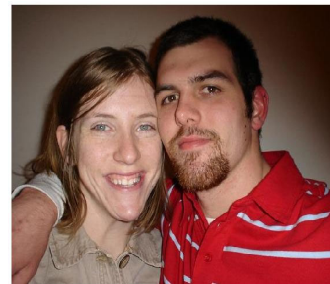
does it relate to the Religious Studies program at the University?

**Dr. Baynes:** The Public Affairs Mission is a great contribution of this university to the state. I've found it quite helpful as a focal point as I develop and teach courses here. The Public Affairs Mission is an ideal framework for a religious studies department in a state school in Missouri, which is right in the middle of the Bible Belt. Because of the importance of religion to many people in this area, and because of the absolute necessity of gaining knowledge of religion to understand national and world affairs, the Department of Religious Studies here is in a unique position to help its students become leaders in the state or anywhere they choose to go.

**Interviewer:** What are some of your thoughts with regard to the faculty of the Religious Studies Department at Missouri State?

**Dr. Baynes:** I couldn't be happier with the faculty here. They are excellent scholars and colleagues, and I'm honored to be one of them!

## Featured Student



### Rachel McBride (and fiancé)

Rachel McBride completed the Religious Studies undergraduate program at Missouri State University in May of 2006 and has been accepted into the Ph.D. program at Princeton University.

Rachel's research interests are centered around American religious histories, "specifically in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with an eye and ear toward sex/gender dynamics involved in the "conversations.""

"In the summer of 2004 I had the opportunity to participate in the Princeton Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (PSURE) at Princeton University. At the encouragement of faculty at Missouri State, I applied to the program, which was geared towards undergraduates from non-research-intensive universities who desired to pursue advanced degrees. While my situation and academic status fit the criteria for applying, my acceptance was undoubtedly contingent on the support of faculty here at Missouri State. The program consisted of twelve students from around the country, and we essentially spent ten weeks engaged in intensive research with a faculty mentor in our academic field. Being able to devote an entire ten weeks to research was something that I had never been



able to afford, and this alone provided perspective on the discipline that is needed to be successful in graduate school.”

When asked to sum up her experience as a student at Missouri State University, Rachel replied: “My experiences at Missouri State have been really positive and reinforcing. As a sort of rebel, I have really enjoyed classes that stray from the beaten path, such as Dr. Finch’s ‘Religion and Food’ and ‘Lived Religion,’ Dr. Schmalzbauer’s ‘Bible Belt’ and ‘Religion, Media, and Popular Culture,’ and Dr. Berkwitz’s ‘Religion, Colonialism, and Post-Colonialism’ courses. While these professors have certainly made their imprint on the moldable clay of my undergraduate years, I’d encourage anyone who is thinking about graduate school, or anyone who is genuinely interested in the study of religion, to take more than the required one 500-level course, beyond REL 580 in whatever sub-field you are most interested. All three of these professors, as well as many other in the department, are incredibly challenging, but their approaches to the study of religion result in fresh perspectives and demand deliberate and creative thinking about humans and their particular experiences, processes that can better be approached in higher-level courses.”

## A Word from our Department Head

Much has changed since our last issue of Religious Studies Notebook in 2000. This issue is primarily an attempt to bring you up-to-date on faculty changes. Dr. Burgess retired in 2004, and Dr. Hedrick retired in 2005.

(The next issue will contain an article on Dr. Hedrick.) They were replaced by Dr. Reinis and Dr. Baynes. In addition, the Strong family endowed the Blanche Gorman Strong Chair of Protestant Studies, which brought us Dr. Schmalzbauer. These gifted faculty members have provided us with different academic strengths. All three retain the same emphasis on outstanding scholarship and time invested in their students to help them succeed.

On the economic side, the State has experienced tough economic times. Higher education funding has been cut and



our students are working extra hours, and even an additional job to pay for higher fees. Nevertheless student interest in Religious Studies is very high. The tragedy of 9/11 brought new questions about Islam and other world religions. Yet, student interest in our courses is often the result of the search for meaning and purpose, and the growing willingness in our society to talk frankly about religion and its impact on every facet of our lives. - Jim Moyer

For more information on the department, please visit our website at <http://www.missouristate.edu/RelSt>.

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