

CATHOLIC STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the Chair

Ann Taves, Cordano Professor of Catholic Studies



Dear Friends of Catholic Studies at UCSB,

We decided to launch a Catholic Studies Newsletter to update you on what has been going on here at UCSB, alert you to some of what is to come, and generally showcase the flourishing state of Catholic Studies at UCSB.

As funds have grown tighter in higher education, we have devoted more of our endowment resources to supporting graduate students in the area of Catholic studies. In addition to providing more

substantial multi-year fellowship packages, we are funding proposals for graduate student conferences, offering small grants for student research and conference travel, and providing new undergraduate courses designed and taught by our most advanced students.

This newsletter showcases these new initiatives alongside lectures and conferences planned by faculty and new faculty initiatives in teaching and research. In the pages that follow you can read about the highly successful student planned conference – “Medieval Voices and Postmodern Theory” – and the upcoming conference on the theology of Jean-Luc Marion, one the foremost Catholic theologians of this generation. Friends of Catholic Studies are welcome to sit in on the conference and to attend Marion’s lecture on May 7th. You will also read about the



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amazing students who are doing work in Catholic Studies and their research interests, which range from late medieval theology to popular devotional practices in Mexico, England, and India.

We are delighted to witness the flowering of Catholic Studies at UCSB and particularly impressed at the many ways in which Catholic Studies connects with and enriches work in other areas of religious studies and other fields of study in the university.

Renowned Philosopher and Scholar Jean-Luc Marion coming to UCSB

Jean-Luc Marion is among the best-known living philosophers in France. He was awarded the 1992 Grand Prix de Philosophie de l'Académie Française, and the 2008 Karl-Jaspers Preis. A former student of Jacques Derrida, Marion has become one of the leading Catholic thinkers of modern times. He studies both the history of modern philosophy and

contemporary phenomenology. His most recent publication, *Au lieu de soi. L'approche de Saint Augustin* (2008), currently in translation, reconceptualizes truth in relation to love. Using neoplatonic mystical thought and Augustinian theology, he considers love as a form of knowing.

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Exciting Events at UCSB

Jean-Luc Marion Conference

What: A discussion of Jean-Luc Marion's latest work regarding Augustinian thought, using it to reflect on the connections that truth and knowing have to love, as opposed to rationality.

When: May 5-7, 2011

Where: McCune Conference Center, HSSB 6020



Jean Luc-Marion

Framing the Word: The Bible in European Culture and Society c. 1250-1611

What: A conference in conjunction with the Bibles exhibit, featuring the following talks: "Commercial Manuscript Makers in Thirteenth-Century Paris and the Making of the 'Santa Barbara Bible'" by Richard Rouse from UCLA, "Printing the Hebrew Bible in Early Modern Europe: Christian and Jewish Scholarly Collaboration in an Age of Persecution" by Theodore Dunkelgrün from Penn, "Witches, Virgins, and the Whore of Babylon: Female Types in a Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Context" by Bonnie Noble from UNC Charlotte, and "Before and After 1611: The Making and Remaking of the King James Version" by Lori Anne Ferrell from Claremont Graduate University

When: Friday, May 27, 2011, 1-4 p.m.

Where: McCune Conference Center, HSSB 6020

Illuminated manuscript from UCSB's Special Collections



Exhibit of Medieval and Early Modern Bibles

What: A student-curated exhibit in the Department of Special Collections featuring illuminated manuscripts as well as early printed Bibles. This includes a 1540 German translation by Martin Luther and the first complete Bible of the English reformation -- the Coverdale Bible.

When: May 15-July 15

Where: UCSB Davidson Library

Responding to Abuse in the Catholic Church: The Challenge of Change from Within

What: Drawing from her recent book entitled *Faithful Revolution: How Voice of the Faithful Is Changing the Church* (Oxford UP, 2011), Tricia Bruce will explore the challenges faced by the lay Catholic group Voice of the Faithful in its efforts to promote structural change in the church following widespread allegations of child abuse. Dr. Bruce received her PhD in Sociology from UCSB in 2006, with research support from the Walter E. Capps Center. She is now a Professor at Maryville College.

When: May 26, 2011 at 4 p.m.

Where: location TBA

Student Spotlight: Alison Bjerke

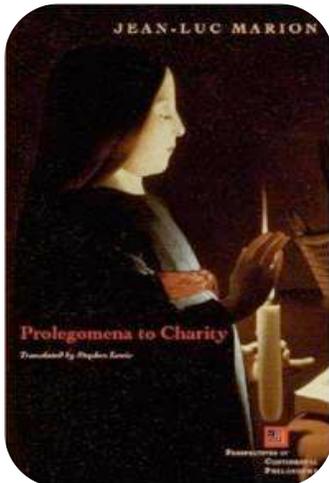
By Rafael Gamboa

Alison Bjerke, a PhD candidate in Religious Studies, is writing her dissertation on the thought of the late medieval theologian and philosopher, William of Ockham. In recent years, scholars have been exploring the impact of late medieval philosophy on modern thought. William of Ockham (1288-1348) has been targeted as a critical figure, but there is deep disagreement about his contributions; some view Ockham as the founder of the modern, Kantian subject, while others see him as the first postmodernist or even deconstructionist. Bjerke's dissertation argues that the divergent tendencies within Ockham's thought result from his creative combination of Augustinian psychology with a reductive metaphysics. Her dissertation shows how these currents result in a modern theory of intuition, which lays the ground for both Kantian representationalism *and* its critique.

Recently, Bjerke presented a paper titled, "William of Ockham and the Inversion of Exteriority" at UC Irvine's graduate conference, Interiority in Early Cultures.



In May, she will be giving a paper titled, "Secularizing Augustine: Memory in Ockham and Husserl," at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at the University of Michigan. Currently, she is also working as a teacher in UC Santa Barbara's writing program.



Jean-Luc Marion

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Marion is currently the John Nuveen Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and Theology at the Divinity School of University of Chicago and where he also holds appointments in the Department of Philosophy and the Committee on Social

Thought. He will give a keynote address at UCSB on Thursday night, May 5, as part of a three-day conference devoted to his work.

The conference will also feature Emmanuel Falque, Professor, Director of Research, and Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Catholic Institute of Paris. Falque is a specialist in medieval philosophy and phenomenology. His work includes rereading medieval theologians, such as St. Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, from the phenomenological perspectives developed by Husserl and Heidegger, and focuses on issues dealing with finitude and embodiment. His most recent publications include *Metamorphosis of finitude, Essay on the birth and resurrection* (2004), and *God, the flesh and the other of Irenaeus in Duns Scotus* (2008).

The Marion Conference, which is free and open to the public, will take place May 5-7 in the McCune Conference Room.

by Rafael Gamboa



Dr. Carlson talks with a conference participant after his keynote address.



Student organizer Brad Onishi welcomes conference participants.



UCSB Graduate students discuss Catholic mystical spirituality over lunch.

Graduate Student Conference

Presented by the Virgil Cordano Endowment in Catholic Studies

by Lauren Horn Griffin

On March 4-5 Catholic Studies hosted a graduate student conference entitled *Medieval Voices and Postmodern Theory*, which investigated the influences of premodern Catholic mystical and ascetic spirituality on formulations of postmodern thought.

The conference included three keynote speakers, including UCSB's own Tom Carlson, who spoke on love in the thought of Augustine and Heidegger, Professor David Albertson from USC who discussed Nicholas of Cusa and Deleuze, and Dr. Maria José A. de Abreu from the University of Lisbon, who presented on Fernando Pessoa and Sebastianism.

In addition to the keynote speakers, twelve graduate students presented papers that juxtaposed elements of Medieval Catholic practices, texts, or spirituality with postmodern theory, including psychoanalysis, phenomenology, poststructuralism, feminism, gender and sexuality, hermeneutics, and theory

of religion. Many speakers investigated connections between premodern and postmodern figures. Those present were able to participate in a fruitful discussion on how Medieval Catholic tradition can be or has been engaged as a constructive theoretical resource for the study of contemporary religious beliefs and practices.

This was an international conference, featuring presenters from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, University of Lisbon, Concordia University in Quebec, and Liverpool Hope University, in addition to students from the University of Chicago, Rice, Yale, and Syracuse.

The conference was a great success and would not have been possible without its graduate student organizers, Rico Monge and Brad Onishi, and without the sponsorship of the Virgil Cordano Endowment in Catholic Studies in the Department of Religious Studies.

*Empire of Souls:
Robert Bellarmine and
the Christian Commonwealth*
by UCSB's Stefania Tutino

OXFORD STUDIES IN
HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Empire of Souls

*Robert Bellarmine and the
Christian Commonwealth*



STEFANIA TUTINO

"Robert Bellarmine, Saint and Cardinal, was one of the most important figures of the Catholic (or Counter-) Reformation. Well known for his role in the investigation of Galileo, and in the condemnation of Copernicanism, he was famous in his own time especially for his writings on church-state relations and papal authority. This fine, scholarly, and lucidly expressed book is the fullest modern account of Bellarmine's theories on these matters. It is particularly valuable for the wide range of manuscript sources in Latin and Italian that it draws on, from archives in the Vatican and elsewhere."

-- John Sommerville,
University of Wisconsin

Courses in Catholic Studies

RG ST 90CS – Global Catholicism Today

A lower division introduction to Roman Catholicism as a global religion with particular attention to the basic structures of the church and the beliefs and practices of Catholics as lived out in different regions of the world today.

RG ST 138-- Topics in Catholic Studies

This upper division seminar explores various topics in Catholic Studies. This past winter, for example, we considered the problems of interpretation that surrounded Joan of Arc and in particular her claims with respect to her "voices."

CH ST 168R-- Latino Religious Traditions in Historical Perspective

This course focuses on the role of religion in the Chicano/Latino historical experience. It includes pre-Columbian traditions, Spanish colonial traditions, religion of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, immigrant religious traditions, and the changing nature of Latino religions in the twentieth century.

RG ST 80B-- Religion & Western Civilization II- Medieval

Beginning with the decline of classical antiquity, this course examines the emergence of medieval Christendom, religion and culture of the Middle Ages.

HIST 122-- Reformation/Counter-reformation

This course covers the Reformation and the Catholic/counter-Reformation in Europe. Students will gain a deeper knowledge of the theological, political and cultural impact of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in a transnational perspective.

RG ST 138B – Catholic Practices and Global Cultures

An examination of the ways in which Catholic spirituality and religious practice have been shaped historically by encounters with various cultures and traditions, e.g. classical Greek, Old Saxon (German), Chinese, Nahua (Mexican), Cuban, Central African, South Asian, Japanese.

The Cordano Fellows and Their Current Projects

Kerry San Chirico, our first Cordano Fellow, transferred into our doctoral program in 2005 from Boston College where he completed most of the work for a PhD in Systematic and Comparative Theology. He came to UCSB to do additional work in Religious Studies and South Asian religions in order to specialize in emergent forms of Christianity with Catholic roots in South Asia. He spent the past year and a half in India conducting dissertation research with a grant from the Fulbright Foundation and the American Institute of Indian Studies. His dissertation focuses on self-designated “Khrist Bhaktas,” or devotees of Christ, who venerate “Yesu” (Jesus), whom they believe to be present in the Blessed Sacrament. The Khrist Bhakta phenomenon, which emerged out of a prayer meeting and subsequent healings involving a Catholic priest in the early 1990s, has slowly grown into a movement that includes thousands of mostly lower-caste Hindu women of the Banaras region. Most Khrist Bhaktas have not been baptized and may never be and, thus, while venerating Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and through other means of encounter familiar to Hindu traditions, may not consume it as long as they remain officially outside the Catholic fold. He has spent his time in India interviewing Khrist Bhaktas spanning three generations, Catholic priests and nuns who serve the Khrist Bhaktas or who are well aware of their existence, and Dalit (formerly called “untouchables”) Catholics who converted to traditional Catholicism five decades ago. He will argue that the Khrist Bhaktas can be interpreted as a traditional Hindu *bhakti* (devotional) movement with many of the attributes of so-called “popular Hinduism” and, with its stress on ecstatic and emotive worship, speaking in tongues, healing, and well-being in this life, as a form of popular (albeit unofficial) charismatic Catholicism. Kerry returns to Santa Barbara at the end of March to finish writing his dissertation and to teach an upper division course for undergraduates on Catholic Practices and Global Cultures.



Rafael Gamboa is currently working on his MA thesis, which focuses on the growing veneration of the Mexican folk saint, Santa Muerte. Though the Catholic Church in Mexico has adamantly criticized her veneration as devil worship, her followers, most of them Catholic, are said to number in the millions, and growing. Her followers can today be found on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border.

Santa Muerte’s origins are obscure, but it is speculated that she is the result of a syncretism between indigenous Mesoamerican veneration of death, with Mexican-Catholic style veneration of saints. Much of the media’s rave around this saint has partly been due to her grotesque appearance, but mostly to the kind of people that are attracted to her.

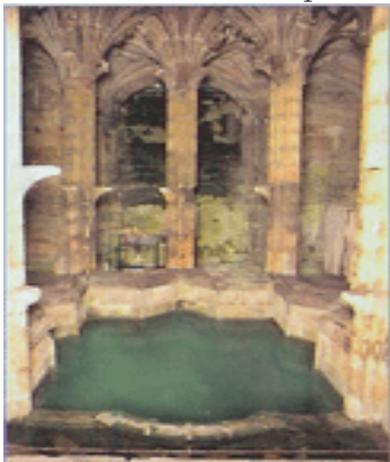
Law enforcement officials on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border have noticed her popularity amongst narcotic smugglers, assassins for hire, and others involved with the Mexican drug cartels. She has also been associated with marginalized groups, such as sex-workers, transgender folks, and prisoners. Many of her followers conduct rosaries and holy mass at her most popular shrine located in one of the toughest and poorest districts in Mexico City, Tepito.

Gamboa has a B.A. in Religious Studies and a B.A. in Psychology from California State University, Fresno. At the end of March, he will be presenting a paper at WECSOR's conference in Wittier College. His paper is titled, "La Santa Muerte's Presence in Poor Communities", and it will offer a brief overview of this phenomenon, along with some reflections on why Santa Muerte has become so attractive, especially among the poor.



Lauren Horn Griffin is pursuing a PhD in Religious Studies at UCSB. She has a bachelor's degree in English and master's degree in Writing Education from the University of Oklahoma as well as a master's degree in Theological Studies from Vanderbilt University.

Her current project examines the Catholic devotion and pilgrimage to St. Winefride's Well, a holy well in Wales, during the 17th century. This pilgrimage and shrine, unlike so many others in Britain, continued despite the English Reformation. While the assumptions involved in this practice were challenged by Protestant reform as well as Catholic/counter-reform (such as Jesuit influences and post-Tridentine theology), the tradition remained extremely popular throughout the Tudor-Stuart period and beyond. Efforts for Catholic renewal fostered by secular and religious clergy together with popular piety helped make this sacred space a symbol of resistance to Protestant hegemony. However, it also functioned as both a physical and ideological space in which English Catholics and, surprisingly, some Protestants could benefit. The site and its symbolic meanings remained a source of conflict for both Tudor and Stuart governments as a vestige of the Catholicism they sought to suppress. Although the site was controversial and contested, these mutually antagonistic communities temporarily coexisted within this space, using these waters for both physical healing and spiritual sustenance.



Lauren is presenting her project on Winefride's Well at the Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies in March; she is also giving a paper entitled "The Two Virgins of Guadalupe: Legitimizing Battle in Old and New Spain," at the American Academy of Religion's regional conference (WECSOR).