

Spring 2001

RSC News

Claremont Graduate University
school of religion

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Qualifying Exams For Dummies

By Stephanie Sleeper

"OK...if you finish this chapter, you can go out and get the mail (but you can't look at any exciting catalogs that arrived). If you finish the book, you can have a snack. And, if you write something about how it fits in with the gazillion other books you've already read, you can watch a half hour of television! So finish in time for *Will and Grace!*" No, I'm not encouraging my kid to do her homework...but if the above self-reinforcement sounds familiar to you, then you know what I'm doing.

I'm studying for my Ph.D. qualifying exams.

There is an elaborate mythos surrounding the "quals," which universally evoke feelings of Fear and Trembling. The terror itself is not aided by the fact that, although nearly everyone I've talked to had or is having a completely different experience (different faculty, different programs, different lists, etc.), we all share

one thing: the feeling of complete detachment from the world. As the butt-shaped groove deepens in my reading chair, the swirling web of books I've read grows thicker in my brain and I'm less able to participate in everyday conversation. I spent Christmas Eve attempting to explain to my family how the power of the female voices in Mel Gibson's head in that movie *What Women Want* (which I have not seen—but I did see commercials for it during my half-hour of allotted TV) relates to his wearing of panty hose. Needless to say, they didn't get it. But they didn't read my gender list either.

Everyone (who is past candidacy, of course) tells me that their exams weren't as bad as they anticipated. I'm not convinced. I think that whatever one is doing right now is clearly the most difficult, whatever it is. But I also have come to the conclusion that the whole exam process is more rite-of-passage than demonstration-of-knowledge. I've read enough about Turner's theory of liminality (on the already-mentioned gender list) to figure this

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**Contacting
Religion Student Council**

Religion Student Council members may be reached through the Internet using the Council's e-mail address, rsc@cgu.edu. The Council may also be contacted via the School of Religion Office, 831 North Dartmouth, Claremont, CA 91711.

The RSC Newsletter is published bi-annually by the Religion Student Council of the School of Religion, Claremont Graduate University. Your ideas and comments are appreciated. If you have news or articles that you would like to share, please contact an Officer.



Religion Student Council

2000-2001

Officers

President	Dolly Bush
Secretary	Amy DeLorenzo
Treasurer	Mike Schufer
Asst. Secretary/ Mentoring Officer	Stephanie Sleeper

Representatives

TEC	Nicole Zeger
HC	Stephanie Sleeper/ Garth Reese
WSR	Amy DeLorenzo
HB	Matt Thomas
NT	Mike Schufer
PRT	Jeanyne Slettom
MA	Dolly Bush

**Representatives to
Claremont Graduate Council
on Religion**

Matt Thomas
Amy DeLorenzo

Liaisons to CST Student Council

Nicole Zeger
James Johnson

Newsletter

Editor	Amy DeLorenzo
Typesetter	Meg Ferris

Community and Graduate Student Life

by Amy DeLorenzo

Perhaps you are aware that several students from the SofR presented papers at a CGU conference on Social Justice (March 2nd). The conference was great, but more importantly, it offered a renewed sense of hope that our work as students and scholars matters and can create change. You see, it has been a little rough for me this first year.

I can't name any one reason for this. And we could probably come up with several very plausible causes for my difficulty—moving across country, leaving old friends, and a whole host of others.

But I'm pretty certain that I've adjusted to my move—so what's the problem? Here's my hypothesis: I have been unable to find a socially/politically active community of grad students here at CGU.

Now don't misunderstand me—I'm not saying they don't exist. As a matter of fact, it is my greatest hope that someone will read this article and call me to prove me wrong. And I've met really cool individual people who fit this description, but no one seems to be organized, and none of them seem to know each other, except for the fabulous CGU conference. But I am talking about more than presenting papers here—I am talking about action.

I don't get it. It's not as if there are no pressing social justice issues around which to rally. We've even got a fairly large one in our own backyard: Keck Graduate Institute. Many Claremonters oppose plans to build a new campus on the Bernard Biological Field Station, at the corner of Mills and Foothill Boulevards.

Foremost, is a concern that this "wild" land be preserved as an open space. Others criticize Keck's policy of non-tenure for its entire faculty, viewing this as an abuse of academic freedom. Still others disagree with the very purpose of the institute—to train students in bio-science related fields, in particular genetic engineering. Take your pick, this place has "social justice" written on its forehead.

I'm guilty of silence myself. Having searched in vain for an active community, I've been feeling a bit hopeless and resigned to the fact that I'll have to drive to LA to find what I'm looking for. Or I can hook up with the undergrad groups, which I've done several times. But I'm generally the only grad student. Not that I mind, but it's discouraging and sometimes a little embarrassing.

Whether we like it or not, CGU students have the reputation of being disinterested and uninvolved. Ask the undergrads—they'll tell you this.

In my dreamy utopian head, I like to think that the work we do is important not just amongst ourselves but to the communities we inhabit and the people we meet.

So I'm testing my theory. I want to know if what we are doing as grad students is at all relevant in the "real world." I am looking for a group of students who wants to engage in campus and local concerns. If you've been saying "right on, Amy" or even, "yeah, maybe she has a small point," then please come to the first Graduate Student Coalition for Social Justice meeting (date TBA).

OK, so I made the name up and it's lofty for a first meeting, but I'm thinking big here. Look for more information on the first meeting soon and bring all your best ideas. 

The GSC— An Important Abbreviation to Remember

by Dolly Bush

With all these abbreviations around, it helps to have a review, especially if you're new (there will be a test later). The GSC is the CGU Graduate Student Council—the official student organization linking students and the administration and faculty.

One representative from each department (or, in our case, School) is formally elected each May, but more than one representative is welcome to serve. The GSC sets out to meet the needs of students and to bend the ear of the powers that be. The Dean of Students is an ex-officio member of the Council, which ensures that your concerns are heard and passed onto the President and Provost, among others.

To review, some of the goals we have for the 2000/2001 academic year are: expanded travel/research awards, increased social activities, starting an official CGU student volunteer organization, discussing the needs and challenges of transdisciplinarity, improving the GSC website, better communication between the GSC and the various student councils of the schools and departments of CGU, better health insurance and a host of other projects.

I, along with Kendra Shelly (Hebrew Bible) represent the School of Religion, so please e-mail us your concerns/ideas at dolly.bush@cgu.edu and/or quincydoc@mindspring.com. And thanks to those who have already offered suggestions. Make your voice heard!! 



RSC Program Notes

Announcing the New RSC Website!

Looking for information about the mentoring program, volunteer opportunities, officers, the Religion Student Directory, social events, lectures, news, or other tidbits about your School of Religion and the Religion Student Council? Check out the new Religion Student Council Website, <http://rsc.cgu.edu>.

Please contact Stephanie Sleeper, webmistress, with any suggestions or comments for the RSC website: Stephanie.Sleeper@cgu.edu.

RSC Email

For your convenience, RSC has an e-mail address: rsc@cgu.edu.

RSC Student Mentoring Program

Each fall and spring many fresh-faced, eager new students arrive in Claremont to begin their arduous journey toward a graduate degree in Religion. But graduate school can be a lonely place!

In order to help these new students find a laundromat and a good used bookstore and to help introduce them to the ways of the School of Religion and CGU in general, the RSC has developed a program to link new students with “seasoned” students in their fields to provide them with the dirt on all of their requirements as well as strategies for surviving (or trying to, at least) in graduate school. We also hope to keep students in the more advanced stages of their degrees in touch with newcomers and current happenings in the School of Religion (and, of course, the latest gossip) through this program.

In addition, because there is no formal Orientation in the spring, the RSC Mentoring program will provide a general introduction to the School of Religion and CGU in the early part of the spring semester for any incoming students.

So if you are a new student (or an old one who feels lost!) please email Stephanie Sleeper at stephanie.sleeper@cgu.edu and she'll put you in touch with a mentor in your field. (Or check out the RSC website: <http://rsc.cgu.edu>.) If you are a “seasoned” student who would like to volunteer or who has suggestions for the program, please also contact Stephanie.

What's In a Name?

We need a name for this here newsletter! Send your suggestions to rsc@cgu.edu. Some type of prize will be awarded.

Wittgenstein once wrote, “It is incredible how helpful a new drawer can be, suitably located in our filing cabinet.”

I think his point was that sometimes little things can make a big difference. Life as a graduate student in Claremont affords you numerous little things: the Writing Center, Religion socials, IAC lectures, the Philosophy of Religion Conference, frequent lectures at the undergraduate colleges, the PRT colloquia, the Teaching Practicum, the WSR conference, Religion Student Council meetings, and on and on and on. An office crammed full of filing cabinets is of little use to anyone, but a couple of these things in your schedule might make a difference.

Take some time to think about what “little things” might make a big difference in your work here.

—Pat Rogers Horn, Program Coordinator

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Reflecting on the First Year of the RSC

by Dolly Bush

In July 2000, the RSC became an official part of the newly formed School of Religion. We set out to represent religion students and generally “try out” the structure that we had set up for ourselves (see our first RSC newsletter on our website for the proposed organization document). If I may toot the RSC’s horn for a moment, we have made quite a bit of progress this year, sending out two newsletters, welcoming an *ex-officio liaison* from CST’s Student Council, and sending one of our own, Nicole Zeger to CST, throwing quite a lively fall barbecue and spring dinner, hosting the infamous every other week socials, sending two representatives to the Claremont Graduate Council on Religion, meeting monthly with Dean Torjesen, building a website, and various other aims.

We will be asking for volunteers to serve for the 2001/2002 academic year.

We also have had time to reflect on the past (almost) year and have made a few decisions about our “official” structure. As you may know, our original plan was to collect a body of elected students, consisting of two representatives from each department, and one overall master’s representative. We had also designed various other structures, including budget concerns, yearly goals of the RSC, and more. This is, in some sense, still our aim. At this point in time, however, we are still running as a volunteer organization and as of yet have held no elections. Recently we decided that we like, at least for now, the volunteer vibe of it. We discovered that we had gotten ahead of ourselves a bit with all the “officialness,” and that the personality of our group has turned out to be informal, non-hierarchical, and generally happy to let our official capacities blend and blur in order to get the job done.

We will, therefore, continue with volunteers and with the simple, yet (if I may say so myself) effective way of getting the job done. So, how does this concern you? For now we are happy with having a minimum of one

Notes and Notices

Best Wishes to Arik

As you may know, our colleague Arik Greenberg was hospitalized. Arik is a Ph.D. student in New Testament and has served on the RSC as treasurer. After a close call, he is on his way back to being his old self again and we all want to wish him a speedy recovery.

Just Arrived

Our community is ever expanding with the most demanding of arrivals: *babies!* Congratulations to new parents, Maura and Pat Rogers Horn, proud parents of Ian Rogers Horn.



Congratulations also to Professor Tammi Schneider and her husband, Farooq Hamid. Baby Sarah arrived last fall.

A Word of Thanks

Special thanks to Richard Curtis. Richard has resigned as Student Council President for personal reasons. Richard was a founding member of RSC and has worked tirelessly to develop the council. We take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank him!

volunteer representative from each department, until such time as we grow into our original, more formalized structure. We will be asking for volunteers to serve for the 2001/2002 academic year. We welcome as many as want to serve from each department. We only ask that if more than one person in a department volunteers (and we expect that will happen), that there be only one official vote of that group when motions are made—which might mean tossing a coin amongst yourselves—and please, no eye clawing or bribing the president for the right to vote.

We ask that from now until late summer you take the time to think about serving next year. If you have questions, please send them to rscc@cgu.edu and don’t forget that all meetings are public, so come join us one afternoon. I should mention, also, that our growing and changing is reflective of the School of Religion as a whole. We are all shooting darts and hope to one day hit the bull’s-eye. We look forward to many, many more years of evolving as the RSC and as a School. Onward and upward! 

Reflections of a First-Year Grad Student

Amy DeLorenzo

Sometimes you're allowed to talk about Hegel like you've met him personally (if you're lucky, you can even act like you beat him in a recent game of wits and logic).

It's ok to have 27.5 potential dissertation topics.

You'll never have to feel one-upped by that card trickin' relative after a dose of Major Interpreters—a great resource for the seemingly ubiquitous grad school activity of mindless name-dropping.

Admitting that you don't know something will often get you further than pretending that you do—well, sometimes.

If you're looking for unusual religious paraphernalia, Pomona thrift stores are for you.

When the landlord won't give you an application because he only rents to "families" and "adults" and doesn't want any drugs in his apartment complex, it's youth hating homophobia (even if you're 29), and it's illegal (and you can be as self-righteous as you wanna be).

Take all the financial aid you can get. The bare minimum is probably a little too minimum.

Joining the Religion Student Council makes you fabulously cool, not to mention informed (and yes, this is a blatant attempt to increase membership).

When an "experienced" student tells you that you won't have time to make friends, don't listen. Try anyway.

Sometimes that undergrad breadth class will be the most demanding class you're taking.

Borders bookstore may be a corporate, wannabe quasi-coffee shop, but they've got some of the most interesting underground musical talent around.

Being a grad student doesn't mean you have to stop watching soap operas and listening to pop music. Janet Jackson is undeniably funky. 

Quals continued from page 1

out. One faculty member told me that I should enjoy the time I am able to spend reading, as there will never be another time in my career when I will be able to do nothing but read. (She sounded a little nostalgic as she said this...I think our dean is a bit overworked!)

So I'm resigned. I can't say I don't appreciate it, as my lists contain books I either want to read, have been meaning to read, or really should read. But I also really relish my "crossing off" ritual, which entails going into the kitchen every time I finish a book and crossing it off of one of the five lists that are posted on my cupboards. (I copied the kitchen cupboard idea from a successful ABD friend. Another friend uses gold star stickers for books she has finished. I crave the obliteration-effect of scratching it out!) It's the feeling of being one step closer to FINISHING that counts.

I have only one piece of advice for those of you approaching this marvelous experience: don't work more than 10 hours a week if you can help it. I quit two of my three part-time jobs at the end of last semester so I would be ready to take these puppies in March. If you work, it will take you years, I promise! 

Stephanie Sleeper is currently studying for her Qualifying Exams in the History of Christianity and is a recovering TV addict.

Institute for Antiquity and Christianity

For the convenience of students, we have listed upcoming lectures at the IAC below. For further information, please consult the IAC's web site: www.cgu.edu/inst/iac/.

March 29, 2001 – 7:30 p.m.

Professor Antoinette Wire of San Francisco Theological Seminary: "Early Jewish Storytelling and Christian Origins."

April 5, 2001 – 7:30 p.m.

Professor David Ulansey of California Institute of Integral Studies: "The Cosmic Mysteries of Mithras."

May 3, 2001 – 7:30 p.m.

Professor Richard Freund of University of Hartford: "The Search for the Origins of Early Christianity at Bethsaida."

Goings On About Town

Regional SBL/AAR Conference Hosted by Claremont Schools

The 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion/Western Region took place in Claremont from Sunday, March 11 through Tuesday, March 13. The conference, held in conjunction with annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature/Pacific Coast Region and the National Association of Professors of Hebrew/Western Chapter, was hosted by the Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Graduate University.

This year's lineup included an impressive array of presentations by students from CGU's School of Religion, including:

- Barbara Murphy, "The Gospel According to Martha"
- Marie Cartier, "Romaine Brooks: A Comparison of Her Paintings and Drawings with Particular Consideration Given to the Conditions of Her Life which Prompted Their Creation"
- Kristy S. Coleman, "A Lacanian Approach to Mahayana Enlightenment or the Preoedipal Aspect of One Mind"
- Scott Jansen, "Ecology and the Problem of Evil"
- Laura Ammon, "Take Account of Persons, Places, Times and Other Circumstances: An Examination of the Work of Joseph Lafitau, Jesuit Chronicler in the New World"
- Catherine Tinsley Tuell, "The Spiritual Journey of Mary Pennington"
- Il-Koo Cho, "Healing in the Context of Korean Pentecostalism, 1950s to the Present: Historical and Ethnographic Approaches"
- Jeffrey Williams, "Relations and Community: Anglo-Protestant Writing in the U.S. Old West"
- Richard Curtis, "The Essence of Religion"
- John W. Woell "The Object of Objectivity: The Conditions for Knowledge in Kant and Peirce"

In addition, Jeffrey Williams presided at the Graduate Student Caucus, and Michael Arnold and Marie Cartier served on a panel on the topic of "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Studies in Religion."

More information about the conference, including a downloadable Word version of each of the program booklets, is available on-line at <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/rkeady/wecor.htm>.

Editor's note: The original intention of the editor was to post information on the AAR/SBL conference ahead of time. Unfortunately, the RSC Newsletter went to the publisher late and therefore the information on the conference is dated. However, it was felt that School of Religion students who were unable to attend might want to know which Claremont students spoke at the conference.

We offer many thanks to those who participated in the preparations and execution of the conference. We would also like to congratulate each School of Religion student who presented papers.

Center for Process Studies

For the convenience of students, we have listed upcoming lectures at the CPS below. For further information, please consult the CPS's web site: www.ctr4process.org.

All lectures take place in the Haddon Conference Room at the School of Theology and begin at 4:10 pm.

Mihaly Toth, "Process Thought After Marxism" on March 22, 2001

Paul Ingram, "On Buddhist-Christian Dialogue with the Natural Sciences" on March 27, 2001

David Wheeler, "Jesus Saves: Process Thought Meets the Personal Savior" on April 10, 2001

Louis K. Jensen, "David Bohm: A Process-Relational Interpretation of Quantum Physics" on May 1, 2001

Wang Shik Jang, Title to be Announced, on June 26, 2001

Bruce Epperly, "Process Theology and Spiritual Transformation: Original Wholeness and Personal Transformation" on July 10, 2001

Save the Date

School of Religion Socials

Twice a month, the School of Religion hosts a social for its students. The socials run from 4-6pm, in the library of the IAC. Food and beverages are provided. For the remainder of the semester, the dates for the socials will be as follows:

- Wednesday, 3/21
- Monday, 4/2
- Wednesday, 4/18
- Thursday, 5/3

PRT Colloquium

Anselm Min Questions D.Z. Phillips
Wednesday, March 28th
7:30-9:30 pm

"Justification and Ontology," presented by Oswald Bayer
Wednesday, April 11th
7:30-9:30 pm

RSC Newsletter

The RSC News will be featuring a student paper in its Fall 2001 issue. Details coming soon.



RELIGION STUDENT COUNCIL

School of Religion
Claremont Graduate University
831 North Dartmouth Avenue
Claremont, California 91711

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