



Religious Studies at UNO

February 2008

Desmarais, Fielding and Haunton are Teaching Award winners

Dr. Michele Marie Desmarais was one of three full-time faculty members to receive an excellence in teaching award in the College of Arts and Sciences this year.



Desmarais was nominated for the College Excellence in Teaching Award. She then had to prepare a persuasive set of documentation for the Excellence in Teaching Award, and to provide the supporting materials, including an explanation of how the materials presented are related to excellence in teaching.

Among that documentation could be student evaluations for the past 3 – 5 years; letters from students or alumni indicating excellence in teaching; peer evaluations, including up to five letters from peers; a list of publications on teaching; a list of presentations to professional audiences on teaching; a list of grants received related to teaching and reports of evaluation instruments; such as TABS; a self-evaluation and reflection on teaching and learning, including a clear statement of teaching philosophy (limited to no more than one page); examples of curriculum development and of innovative teaching methods developed; a list of thesis and dissertation committees; a list of workshops on teaching and/or learning attended, a list of independent studies directed, and evidence of student success. A notebook of accomplishments and letters of recommendation are submitted directly to the selection committee for the college.

There are also three awards given to part-time faculty. Christian Haunton and



Julien Fielding were winners in the part-time category.

They also had to prepare documentation for the award, and to provide the supporting materials. The materials requested for consideration of this award were a letter of nomination; a letter from the nominee's Chair (unless the Chair is also the nominating individual); support letters from no more than three (3) students and from no more than three (3) peers; their CV and a one page Teaching Philosophy statement.

The selection committee was asked to focus more on the quality of the information presented than on the quantity in the selection of both full- and part-time faculty.

All full-time and part-time faculty whose principal appointment is in a department in the College of Arts and Sciences were eligible for an award.

Winners are selected by the committee, members of which are appointed by the Dean of the College.

The award carries a \$1,000 award. These awards are possible through the generous assistance of the Alumni Association.

Brooks Lecture to be March 27

Alan E Steinweis, Hyman Rosenberg Professor of Modern European History and Judaic Studies in the Department of History at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln will be the 15th Sidney H. Brooks Lecture speaker on Thursday, 27



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Steinweis (continued from page 1)

March 2008, at the W. H. Thompson Alumni Center. The lecture begins at 7:00 p.m.

His lecture will be on "Diagnosing and Combating Holocaust Fatigue."

Alan E. Steinweis joined the Department of History at UNL in August 1993. He received his PhD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he worked under the distinguished historian Gerhard L. Weinberg. He specializes in the history of the Holocaust and Nazi Germany, and teaches courses on those subjects in addition to courses on European history, Jewish history, and historical methodology.

He is the author of *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (University of North Carolina Press, 1993; paperback 1996), and *Studying the Jew: Scholarly Antisemitism in Nazi Germany* (Harvard University Press, 2006; paperback 2008.) The latter book was designated a Finalist for the National Jewish Book Award in the Holocaust category. He has co-edited two further volumes: *The Impact of Nazism: New Perspectives on the Third Reich and Its Legacy* (University of Nebraska Press, 2003; paperback 2007), and *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates about Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* (Berghahn Books, 2006; paperback 2007). He has also published several articles addressing the resonance of the Holocaust in American society and culture. Professor Steinweis serves as the Editor of the American edition of the *Comprehensive History of the Holocaust*, a monograph series published by the University of Nebraska Press in cooperation with Yad Vashem, the Holocaust research and commemoration authority of the state of Israel. He is currently writing a book on the November 1938 "Kristallnacht" pogrom in Germany, which will be published by Harvard University Press.

Professor Steinweis has received fellowships from the Social Science Research Council, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Fulbright Commission, and the Skirball Foundation. He has held visiting positions at the Universities of Hannover and Heidelberg in Germany, and at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, and

has been a visiting fellow at the Free University of Berlin and at the Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. He is the recipient of a Distinguished Teaching Award from the College of Arts and Sciences, a "People Who Inspire" award from the Mortar Board National Honor Society, and several teaching recognitions from the University of Nebraska Parents' Association.

The W. H. Thompson Alumni Center is located 67th and Dodge at the west edge of the UNO campus.

Awards Banquet is 9 April

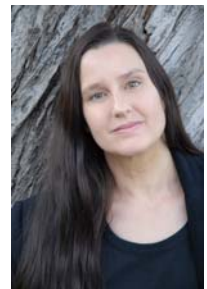
Scholarships will be awarded and graduates will be honoured on Thursday, 9 April 2008, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the 2008 Religious Studies Banquet. It will be held in the Chancellor's Room on the second floor in the Milo Bail Student Center on the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus.

Three Ron Burke Scholarships and one Dale Stover Scholarship will be awarded. Recent graduates will be recognized and the Outstanding Religion Alumna will be honoured.

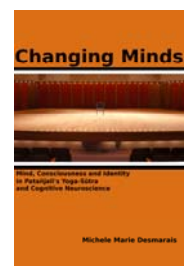
Books published by faculty

Dr. Desmarais Publishes First Book

Dr. Michele Marie Desmarais has had book published. It is entitled *Changing Minds: Mind, Consciousness and Identity in Patañjali's Yoga-sūtra and Cognitive Neuroscience*. It is the 14th volume in Motilal's series on India's Scientific Heritage (chief editor Dr. S. N. Bhavsar).



The book explores the philosophy, psychology and practices presented in the Yoga-Sūtra, which is the foundational text for Yoga and particularly for Classical Yoga. Since the Yoga-sūtra is interdisciplinary and explains mind primarily in terms of matter, the



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UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha

The Rabbi Sidney H. Brooks Lecture

“Diagnosing and Combating Holocaust Fatigue”

featuring

Alan E. Steinweis

Hyman Rosenberg Professor of Modern
European History and Judaic Studies
Department of History
University of Nebraska - Lincoln



**Thursday, 27 March 2008
7:00 p.m.**

**William H. Thompson Alumni Center
Centennial Hall**

Public Welcome

Sponsored by
UNO Religious Studies Program, Temple Israel and College of Arts and Sciences
The University of Nebraska is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution

Books (continued from page 2)

book includes an analysis of mind and Yoga's transformational psychology in light of modern cognitive neuroscience.

UNO Religious Studies alumna, Karen Kempkes, did the photo that appears on the book cover and the photo of Dr. Desmarais that appears here.

The book will be available from Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited in Delhi, India (<http://www.mlbd.com/>) within the next month.

Rami Arav publishes book of essays



Rami Arav



Paul Williams



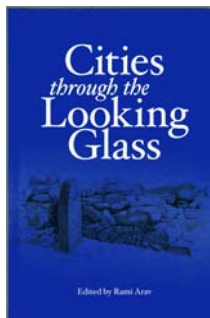
Nicholae Roddy



Laura Grams

Dr. Rami Arav has edited a new book, *Cities Through the Looking Glass: Essays on the History and Archaeology of Biblical Urbanism*. The book also includes essays by Dr. Laura Grams, Dr. Paul Allen Williams and Dr. Nicholae Roddy.

Williams's essay is "Gospel Cities: Real, Imagined and Avoided." Grams, a philosopher professor at UNO, presented on "The City and the Philosophy in Ancient Greece." Roddy's essay was "Landscape of Shadows: The Image of the City in the Hebrew Bible." Arav, in addition to writing the Introduction wrote on the "Fortified City of Bethsaida: The Case of an Iron Age Capital City." The book is published by Eisenbrauns (2008 [www.eisenbrauns.com]).



The book is a collection of essays that were delivered at the 2003 Batchelder Conference. The essays in this book originated as papers presented at the Conference on Urbanism in the Biblical World that took place on October 28–30, 2003, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. This conference was part of the annual series of the Clifton Batchelder Conference for Biblical Archaeology and the Bethsaida Excavations Project. The

conference was structured so that text scholars and material-culture scholars were able to interact and influence one another. This interdisciplinary approach created a unique, productive atmosphere where scholars who come from different disciplines were able to share and exchange ideas. Thus, scholars from three major disciplines—Greek philosophy, biblical studies, and archaeology—produced lectures and papers on urbanism in the ancient world that reflect multihued perspectives.

JR & F Editors at Sundance



Bill Blizek and Geoffrey Gilmore, Sundance Film Festival director



Maren Hintz, Media Credentials Coordinator, and Ruby Ramji, Film Editor for the *Journal of Religion and Film*.

Drs. William L. Blizek, *Journal of Religion & Film* founding editor, and *JR & F* Film Editor Ruby Ramji were among members of the press who attended the 2008 Sundance Film Festival 17 – 25 January in Park City, Utah. They reviewed films with religious content or other religion related elements.



Robert Redford talks with media members at a press conference.

During their stay in Park City they not only viewed films, but were able to talk to directors of the films and attend a press conference by SFF Founder Robert Redford.

The reviews appear in the *Journal of Religion & Film* shortly after the end of the Sundance Film Festival and will become a part of the April issue of the journal as "Report from Sundance 2008: Religion and Independent Film." *JR & F*, which begins its 12th year of online publication this spring, can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf>.

Faculty Notes

Dr. Guy Matalon has had two articles accepted for publication. The first is "Rebecca's Hoax" which

will be published by *Jewish Bible Quarterly*. The second is an article is called, "Toward a Theology of the Federation." It has been accepted for publication by the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*.

Dr. Paul Allen Williams, chair of Religious Studies, was quoted in the Feb. 26 issue of the *Omaha World-Herald* about Americans exploring other religions.

Dr. Michele Marie Desmarais has been awarded tenure and promoted to associate professor by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She has also been promoted from Associate Editor to Editor of the *Journal of Religion & Film*. Her editorship will begin with the preparations for the October 2008 issue of the *Journal*.

Dr. Paul Allen Williams stepped down as editor this spring to concentrate on his position of Religious Studies chair, his membership of several UNO committees and research. He was editor since the fall of 2004.

Dr. Michele Marie Desmarais presented a paper at the 2008 World Congress on Psychology and

Spirituality 6 January 2008. The Congress was held in New Delhi, India at the India Habitat Center.

Her presentation was on Enhancing Change: Classical Yoga and Neuroplasticity. The foundation for Classical Yoga, Patanjali's Yoga-Suktra contains a category of practices termed Abhyasa – vaigrya (repeated practice and detachment). Such practices may enhance neuroplasticity, the brain's natural ability to change. Cultivation and elimination are two processes shared in common by Yoga practice and brain function.

Also presenting with her on the panel, Science of Consciousness, were Amit Goswami/Uma, Jonathan Shear, Ulrich Mohrhoff, and Nevin Doshi. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, BKS Lyengar, Dr. Karan Singh, Shrutu, Stanislav Grof and Stuart Sovatsky also were among those speaking at the Congress.

She also gave a lecture at the Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and spoke to a group of Indian business women.

Kathy Schwartz, staff assistant and managing editor of the *Journal of Religion & Film*, accompanied her to the conference.

Natan Sharansky draws large Omaha crowd

The ninth annual Shirley and Leonard Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights was held Nov. 19 in the Milo Bail Student Center at UNO. This year's speaker was Natan Sharansky, chairman and distinguished fellow at the Institutue for Strategic Studies, The Shalem Center in Jerusalem, Israel.



Sharansky addressed about 300 attendees the night of the lecture. He had also met with some community during the afternoon prior to the lecture.

UNO's department of philosophy and religion and International Studies and Programs sponsored the lecture

with the support of the Shirley and Leonard Goldstein Fund at the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Graduates

December graduates with religious studies majors were **Harold Arrance**, **Steve Bowman**, **David Dick**, **Michael Harvat**, **James Lowe**, and **Tegan Matteo**. **Chase Kozicki** graduated with a religious studies minor.

Arrance graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in business administration and majors in accounting and religion. **Lowe** received his Bachelor of Music from the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media with majors in music performance – string and religion.

College of Arts and Science degrees were received by **Bowman**, **Dick**, **Harvat**, **Kozicki**, and **Matteo**. **Bowman** received a Bachelor of Arts degree with majors in Religion and History

and minors in Native American Studies and Anthropology. **Dick** received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in religion and minors in Writer's Workshop and Medieval/Renaissance Studies. **Harvat** graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts and a major in religion.

Matteo received her Bachelor of Arts degree with majors in religion and history. **Kozicki** graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in sociology with a concentration in Anthropology and minors in Native American Studies and Religion.

Share your milestones

Please send news about your milestones (new positions, promotions, marriages, births, future education, etc.) by sending it to Religious Studies Program, UNO, ASH 205,

6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182-0265 or to Kathy Schwartz at kschwartz@mail.unomaha.edu.

Religious Studies has several NU Foundation options for donating

The Religious Studies Program has two scholarship funds, the Ron Burke Scholarship Fund and the Dale Stover Scholarship Fund.

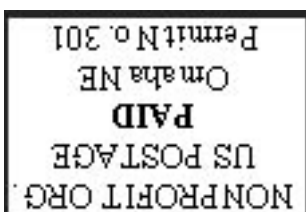
There UNO Religious Studies Fund for Excellence is a fund that benefits and supports the religious studies program. Money donated to that fund can be used to supplement funding for lectures. It can be used to provide special awards for students. For example, the Essay competition awards were given last year from this fund. It can also be used to support special projects of faculty members. This fund is not an endowed fund.

There is also a *Journal of Religion & Film* Fund for Excellence which supports the Religious Studies program's *Journal of Religion & Film* activities and events. Those

activities have included co-sponsorship of the Native American Film Panel which brought a native film maker, Gail Maurice, to UNO in the spring of 2006 to meet with students, faculty and the public and the attendance of editors at various film festivals to study and review new film offerings as they relate to religion.

To make your tax deductible donation to the UNO Religious Studies Fund for Excellence, *Journal of Religion & Film* Fund for Excellence, or either of the scholarship funds, make your check out to the University of Nebraska Foundation and write the fund name on the memo line.

Sending your checks to the Religious Studies Program, ASH 205, 6001 Dodge Road, Omaha, NE 68182-0265, allows the program to make certain acknowledgements of gifts are done promptly by the department.



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