

The Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life

Annual Report 2021-2022

May 16, 2022

Staff

Mark Silk, Director

Andrew Walsh, Associate Director

Christine McCarthy McMorris, Administrator

Michael Sean Winters, Senior Fellow

Jack Carroll, Undergraduate Fellow

Seamus (Kip) Lynch, Undergraduate Fellow

Surya Rai, Undergraduate Fellow

With cautious optimism, the Greenberg Center — like most of the rest of the academic world — returned to in-person events this academic year, following Trinity College and the State of Connecticut guidelines. It has been a pleasure to interact with students, staff and faculty face to face, even if masked. This year we restored some of the events we had to cancel last year, including the Distinguished Visiting Fellow week and the biennial Berkman Journalism Award. Our monthly faculty lunches started up again in person, with everyone attending who felt it was in their comfort zone. We took part in organizing the 50th Teaching Anniversary tribute to Sam Kassow, which honored an exceptional scholar, educator, and member of our Advisory Board. The cohabiting of the Greenberg Center and the Shelby Cullom Davis Endowment/Formal Organizations at 71 Vernon Street has transitioned smoothly and has led to many improvements in the building's appearance. As we look to the years ahead, we hope to get your input on the best ways to keep the Greenberg Center an important resource on and off campus.

Religion in Public Life

Greenberg Center Study Group Lunches

This year's eclectic luncheon seminar series was well attended by a core group of 12-15 faculty members together with undergraduate fellows and invited guests with a particular interest in the subject and article or chapter being presented. Hillel House was kind enough to host our lunches during the fall semester, because of spacing distancing problems at 71 Vernon.

9/27 Our first guest was Trinity colleague Tim Landry, associate professor of Anthropology and Religious Studies, who circulated "Too Poor to Believe": Cowries, Cash, and Gifts, an Examination of "Voodoo Economics," an article he is preparing for publication.

10/6 Jason Berry conducted his faculty seminar via Zoom, as an accident prevented him from flying up from New Orleans. Along with the lunch, Cinestudio screened Jason's "City of a Million Dreams," based on his identically titled recent history of New Orleans. There was a Zoom Q and A with Jason and two of his collaborators after the film.

11/29 Greenberg Center Director Mark Silk led a discussion on "Judeo-Christian: From Anti-Fascist to Neo-Fascist," a pre-Covid paper he presented at the American Association of Law Schools conference in New Orleans. We also enjoyed debating "Is Josh Mandel the 'Christian' values candidate or the 'Judeo-Christian' candidate?" one of Mark's Religion News Service columns.

3/1 Our guest was Amanda Bertana, assistant professor of Sociology at Southern Connecticut State College. Her chapter "*Religious Explanations for Coastal Erosions in Narikoso, Fiji*," was printed in the book *Understanding Climate Change Through Religious Lifeworlds*.

3/9 See below.

5/9 Ruth Braunstein, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Connecticut and Director of the Meanings of Democracy Lab, presented her article, "*The "Right" History: Religion, Race, and Nostalgic Stories of Christian America*."

Greenberg Distinguished Visiting Fellow

After skipping our Distinguished Visiting Fellow program due to COVID in 2020-21, we were pleased to be able to start up again. Over a week, a leading scholar in American religion/politics/culture meets with small groups of students, community members and faculty, attends classes, gives a public lecture and takes part in a celebratory dinner with a group of invited guests.

The 2021-22 Greenberg Distinguished Visiting Fellow was James Hudnut-Beumler, professor and former dean at the Vanderbilt University Divinity School. A longtime friend of the Greenberg Center, Jim contributed a chapter to *Religion and Public Life in the Middle Atlantic Region* in our Religion by Region series and co-edited the award-winning *The Future of Mainline Protestantism in America* in our Future of Religion in America series. Jim was generous with his time and took part in many activities that were of great interest to all.

Monday March 7 JH-B, along with Mark Silk, attended a lunch and general conversation on the future of mainline Protestantism with members of the Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, formerly the Hartford Seminary.

Tuesday March 8

Attended Mark Silk's class on religion and climate change, 1:30-2:45.

Wednesday March 9

12 -1:30. Joined our Faculty Discussion Lunch Group at 71 Vernon Street. We read the first chapter (I Was Hungry, and You Gave Me Something to Eat: Hospitality, Scarcity, and Fear in Southern Christianity) of his *Strangers and Friends at the Welcome Table: Contemporary Christianities in the American South*

Thursday March 10

1:30 – 2:45 JHB attended Tamsin Jones class.

4:30-6:00. “The Moral Crisis in Contemporary American Christianity,” a public lecture, took place Thursday, March 10 at 4:30 pm in Seabury chapel 312.

6:15-8:00. Dinner with invited guests, Reese Room.

Program on Public Values

The Moses Berkman Journalism Award

Every two years, The Berkman Award is supported by The Moses and Florence Berkman Endowed Fund at Trinity College in honor of the late Moses Berkman '20. This year's choice was Kara Swisher, technology reporter for *The New York Times* (which also hosts her podcast *Sway*) Called “the most feared woman in Silicon Valley, Swisher has been covering the industry since the beginning of the tech explosion. Her public lecture on October 21, which was well-attended by students, was titled “Tech Is So Poor, All It Has Is Money.”

The Program on Public Values supported the second and final year of the Faculty's Ad Hoc Committee on the Climate Emergency, which has been charged with enhancing the College's curricular and co-curricular climate offerings. At its May 3 meeting, the Faculty passed a resolution introduced by the Committee to recommend that the Curriculum Committee take up a “Climate Across the Curriculum” program and create an ongoing faculty committee to promote and administer the College's climate-related curricular and co-curricular initiatives. A final report on the Committee's work, including a summary of a survey it conducted of all academic departments and programs, will be submitted by the end of May.

Co-Sponsored Event

On April 19, 2022, Ambassador Dennis Ross gave talk at Zachs Hillel House on “What Can We Expect in the Middle East over the Coming Months? Nuclear Negotiations, Russia's Invasion of Ukraine, and Great Power Competition.” Ambassador Ross has played a major role in shaping U.S. involvement in the Middle East peace process and teaches at Georgetown's Center for Jewish Civilization. The talk was sponsored by Trinity College Hillel, the Jewish Studies Program, and the Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life.

Publications

Future of Religion in America

The Center's series of volumes on the Future of Religion in America continues, with the remaining volumes to be published by Springer. *The Future of Metaphysical Religion in America* (Christopher White and Mark Silk, co-editors) appeared in early 2022, and a revised draft of *The Future of Judaism in America* (Jerome Chanes and Mark Silk, co-editors) will be submitted to the publisher in June.

Staff Activities

Mark Silk

Teaching:

Fall: RELG 265: Religion and American Politics

Spring: ENVS/PBPL/RELG 203: Religion and Climate Change

Lectures, Conferences etc.:

“Orthodoxy and Human Rights” conference, March 14-16 (Orthodox Christian Studies Center, Fordham University)

Panelist, “Putin’s War and the Fracturing of Faith in Ukraine,” Religion News Service, March 17

Selected to serve on Board of Advisors of Boston College’s Boisi Center for the Study of Religion in American Public Life

Publications:

“The Utilitarian Context of American Civil Religion,” in Rhys H. Williams, Raymond Haberski Jr., and Philip Goff, eds., *Civil Religion Today* (New York: New York University Press, 2021), 35-49

“From Outlier to Advance Guard: Cascadia in Its North American Context,” in Paul Bramadat, Patricia O’Connell Killen, and Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, *Religion at the Edge: Nature, Spirituality, and Secularity in the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2022), 125-140

“Spiritual Politics” weekly column for the Religion News Service

Faculty committee work

Parliamentarian (reelected in Spring 2021)

Hillel Advisory Board (search committee for new director)

Public Policy and Law Advisory Board

Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on the Climate Emergency

Andrew Walsh

Andrew continued to work on the Future of Religion in America book series, now nearing completion. In the Spring, Andrew joined the. He is currently serving on Hartford’s Columbus Advisory Task Force, which is advising the City Council on what to do about parks, statuary, and a street named for Christopher Columbus. Frederick Law Olmsted Bicentennial Planning Committee. On September 10,

2021, he lectured on “Religion in Early National Hartford” for the Black Heritage Project, Capitol Community College.

Christine McCarthy McMorris

In her 21st year at Trinity College, Christine continued to take care of administrative duties, organize events and be a friendly face to the students and professors who stop by. Aside from her work at the Center, she researched films and writing their descriptions and publicity in her position on the April in Paris Film Festival committee. Christine wrote descriptions of the films playing at Cinestudio for their website and FB page.