

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

Annual Report 2025-2026

Leslie Ribovich, Ph.D., Director
Reanna Kuzdzal,
Program Coordinator



Director's Note

2025-2026 was an exciting year at the Greenberg Center!

In my second year as director, we continued to solidify the Center as an invaluable resource for intellectual engagement and community on Trinity's campus. Through our signature works-in-progress series and expanded undergraduate fellowship program, students, faculty, and staff across campus and beyond have come to us to ask important questions and learn more about the role religion plays in public life. Within Hartford, our students continued to work with the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance, and we built new partnerships with Center Church and Connecticut Appleseed Center for Law and Justice. We welcomed preeminent journalist and producer Chana Joffe-Walt and photographer and journalist David González for events on race, education, and religion in cities. We were also happy to host a workshop on new directions in research on religion and education for faculty across the country.

While I was on parental leave in the spring, Reanna Kuzdzal did an amazing job coordinating events and overseeing our undergraduate fellowship program. Thank you, Reanna!

Looking to 2026-2027, my aim is to continue our work at Trinity and in Hartford while also focusing on the Center's national profile. I am looking forward to continuing our work together!

Leslie Ribovich

Highlight of Leslie's Activities

"Religion and Gender in Contemporary America." Co-taught with Prof. Shane Gleason. Trinity Prison Education Project. Summer 2025.

"The Real Reason the Supreme Court Defines Anti-LGBTQ+ Beliefs as Religious." With Charles McCrary. *Slate*. 9 July 2025.

"Educating for the New Jerusalem to Deliver the Messianic Age: A Fabulative Friendship with Louis Finkelstein and James Baldwin." With Cara Rock-Singer. *Jewish Quarterly Review*. 1 August 2025.

"Paradoxes of Education: A Symposium on Without A Prayer." *Religious Studies Review*. September 2025.

Award Finalist: Best First Book in the History of Religions. *American Academy of Religion*. 2025.

"Dear New York friend': Innocence and the Nation in Gifts Sent to the Manhattan School for Children in Fall 2001." *Political Theology*. 18 Feb. 2026.

"Law and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Toolkit for the Humanities Scholar." Guest Lecturer, Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University. July 13-26, 2026.

Fall 2025 Events



Hartford-NYC Education Integration Conference

Tuesday, June 10 and
Wednesday, June 11



Urban Devotions: Images of Faith in the City Photo Exhibit and Panel

Friday, September 26

David González, Dr. Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada,
Dr. Efrain Agosto, Prof. Pablo Delano,
Moderated by Prof. Leslie Ribovich
See additional coverage [here](#) and [here](#).



New Directions in Religion and Education Workshop

Friday, October 10 and Saturday, October 11



Works-in-Progress Lunches

Wednesday, November 12

Prof. Susanne Kerekes

Presented a chapter on material practices
amongst younger Buddhists



Class Visits

Sarah McCoy, Patricia O'Rourke, Rep.
Maryam Khan, and Dean Selders to Prof.
Ribovich's classes, *Religion in Hartford* and
Religion, Politics, and Policy

Moses Berkman'20 Memorial Journalism Award Presentation and Visit



On Wednesday, October 22 and Thursday, October 23, the Greenberg Center hosted its Berkman Journalism Award winner, Chana Joffe-Walt.

Joffe-Walt is a reporter and producer for [This American Life](#) and the creator of the [Nice White Parents](#) podcast.



During her visit, she had a thoughtful conversation with Prof. Ribovich and a great Q & A with members of the campus community, followed by a delightful dinner in Hamlin Hall and the presentation of the award by President Dan Lugo.

Joffe-Walt also visited with faculty and students in several classes, as well as our undergraduate Greenberg Fellows and members of the *Trinity Tripod*.

Additional coverage of Joffe-Walt's visit by Trinity's Communications Team can be found [here](#).



Spring 2026 Events

Works-in-Progress Lunches

Wednesday, February 25

Prof. Tamsin Jones

Presented a chapter about
challenging definitions of maternity
in phenomenology

Wednesday, March 25

Prof. Abby Fisher Williamson

Presented work surrounding
structural contributions to people's
perceptions of flourishing

Religion, Law, and the Land Panel

Tuesday, March 31

Prof. Samuel Catlin,

Prof. Mareike Koertner,

and Anna Szesnat '26,

Moderated by Prof. Glenn Falk

Greenberg Fellows End-of-Year Presentations

Wednesday, April 30

Senior undergraduate fellows presented
their final projects

Co-Sponsored Events

Trinity Hip-Hop Festival

Thursday, April 9-Saturday, April 12

Eli Rosenblatt Jewish Studies Lecture

Tuesday, April 15



Greenberg Fellows



Fellows' Activities

Shazif Ahmed '26 - Researched Trinity students' use of AI in religious exploration and created a website to document his findings.

Henry Graf '26 - Worked with the History Team at Center Church to explore archives related to the Connecticut tour of Prince Sori; presented this research at the "Walking in the Footsteps of the Prince" event at Center Church in May.

Amber Gray '26 - Visited archives to document the histories of indigenous people and their incarceration in "praying Indian towns." These stories are documented on a website she created.

Melanie Rayl '26 - Worked with the Center for Leadership and Justice to organize their archive and research Fresh Air Funds and the House in the Fields, a summer camp for city children.

Ella Samson '26 - Researched and documented stories about Haitian voodoo and altered states of consciousness. She presented her own story in a short film she made.

Junior and Advisory Fellows - Attended meetings, supported Center events, and assisted with senior fellow projects.

2026-2027 Senior Fellows: Kate Behrman '27, Nicholas Hanson '28, Alex Osowiecki '27,
Jessica Salinas '27, and Prithvi Satish '27

Junior Fellows: Kashmala Khan '29, Emma St. John '28, and Maha Yamagami '29

Faculty Research Highlights

The Greenberg Endowment continues to support faculty research funds in Religious Studies and Public Policy and Law. Here are a few highlights!

Samuel Catlin presented the papers "Literalism, Pornography, Dissent" at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (San Diego, CA, November 2025) and "Allegories of Secularism: Lee Edelman at the End of History" at the annual meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association (Montréal, Québec, February 2026), spoke on a roundtable about political uses of the figure of the child at the annual meeting of the American Studies Association (San Juan, PR, November 2025), and organized and chaired the roundtable "Powers of Jewish Studies" at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies (Washington, DC, December 2025).

Gabe Hornung presented a paper at the summer 2026 Annual Conference for the European Association of Biblical Studies in Leuven, Belgium. His paper explores some theoretical and methodological conclusions concerning intertextual readings of biblical texts that his book engages.

Tamsin Jones traveled to Malibu, CA to attend the Mystical Theology Network Conference. There, she presented a paper which was the product of a previous research trip to France to participate the International Working Group on Mysticism, Feminism and Ethics. She attended the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in Boston, MA. She also gave a keynote lecture at the International Network in Philosophy of Religion biennial meeting in Paris entitled "Καλέω καλλος: On Beauty at the End."

Susanne Kerekes attended the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in Boston (Nov. 2025) to co-chair the Collective Karma Seminar Unit. She presented a guest lecture at USC for Prof. Jessica Zu's Buddhist Economics class (April 2026). She also gave opening remarks for a panel on "Materiality" for an invitation-only Theravada Civilizations Conference held at University of Virginia (May 2026). Lastly, there were several academic books that Kerekes purchased as part of her ongoing research for her current book project.

Faculty Research Highlights

Mareike Koertner used her Greenberg funds to present a paper at Germany's major conference for Oriental Studies (Deutscher Orientalistentag), which only meets every couple of years. The remainder of her funds were used to purchase books in preparation for a new course in fall 2026.

Serena Laws presented papers at two panels at the American Political Science Association conference in Vancouver in September, and also presented a paper at the Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago in April. She also worked with an editor on chapters of her book project.

Evan Turiano presented his research on slavery and the development of constitutional politics at two conferences: a special symposium on the legal history of the Civil War era held at the University of Mississippi in October 2025, and a panel he organized on the relationship between Black legal rights and proslavery politics at the Southern Historical Association's annual meeting in St. Pete Beach, Florida in November 2025.

Abigail Fisher Williamson used research funds to support analytic software subscriptions and participation in a conference on "Asylum in the City," in preparation for editing an upcoming edition of the Russell Sage Foundation Journal of Social Sciences.

Advisory Board

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*Denotes also on Governance Committee