The following is a chronological compilation of all the sessions and individual papers at this year’s American Academy of Religion annual meeting in Chicago, IL dealing in some way with “the secular” (secularism, secularization, nonreligion, unbelief, etc.). Sessions that are tagged with (*) contain single papers related to this theme. In those cases only the relevant paper has been listed. Please check the AAR program book for more complete and up to date information and let us know if anything relevant is missing.
Religion in South Asia Section and Jain Studies Group (A17-206)

Whitney Kelting, Northeastern University, Presiding
Theme: Jains, Muslims, Christians: Interrogating Religious Borders in Sultanate, Mughal and Colonial India
Saturday - 1:00 PM-3:30 PM

Scholarship on the interactions between Jains and non-Jains has tended to look almost exclusively at formal comparisons and localized studies of specific historical interactions between Jains and mostly Buddhism and Buddhists, and Hinduism and Hindus. This has left a serious lacuna in Jain studies, one that this session takes a preliminary step toward addressing: Jain interactions with Muslims and Christians.

Audrey Truschke, Columbia University
Negotiating Religious Difference in the Mughal World: Jain Defenses Against the Charge of Atheism

History of Christianity Section (A17-303)

Ellie Bagley, Middlebury College, Presiding
Theme: Author Meets Critics: Brad Gregory's The Unintended Reformation (Harvard University Press, 2012)
Saturday - 4:00 PM - 6:30 PM

This session examines the way in which we study Christianity in the early modern period through four responses to Brad Gregory's The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society (Harvard University Press, 2012). In this work, Gregory ventures outside of his main field of early modern religious history to trace the effects of the Reformation on the modern world. The responses to Gregory's work will highlight some of the methodological questions raised in studying the early modern period, such as those connected to the splintering of Christianity and subsequent confessionalization process, the expansion of the known world and the resulting missionary activity, the changes in the lives of women, the intellectual effects of increased book production due to the printing press, and the shifts in the relationships between church and state.

Panelists:
Nathan Rein, Ursinus College
Mary Corley Dunn, Saint Louis University
Paul Lim, Vanderbilt University
Elissa Cutter, Saint Louis University

Responding:
Brad Gregory, University of Notre Dame
North American Religions Section (A17-304)

Kathleen Flake, Vanderbilt, Presiding
Theme: *Author Meets Critics: Tracy Fessenden's Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton University Press, 2007)

**Saturday - 4:00 PM - 6:30 PM**

In this session, a handful of scholars critically evaluate the acclaimed *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton University Press, 2007), with author Tracy Fessenden serving as respondent. There will also be much time for audience conversation about issues raised by this book and where intellectual work in its allied fields is going or should be going.

**Panelists:**
Judith Weisenfeld, Princeton University
Roger Lundin, Wheaton College
Michael McNally, Carleton College
Ebrahim Moosa, Duke University
Arvind Mandair, University of Michigan
Martin Kavka, Florida State University
Responding:
Tracy Fessenden, Arizona State University

*Religion, Sport, and Play Group (A17-325)*

Annie Blazer, Princeton University, Presiding
Theme: Sport, Religion, and Nationalism

**Saturday - 4:00 PM-6:30 PM**

This panel (the first ever presented by the new Religion, Sport, and Play Group) will examine rhetoric and strategies used by nation-states to foster allegiance to national teams and illustrate the religious dimensions and geopolitics of the Olympics and other sports at different critical points in the twentieth century. The first paper will examine the attitude of the Holy See toward sport during the Inter War Period (1919-1939). The second paper will consider the ethical dimensions of the professional soccer club Bayern Munich during the Third Reich. The third paper reminds us of our specific location—the first US Olympics in 1904 were to be staged in Chicago. This paper looks at Olympic founder de Coubertin’s understanding of the religious dimension of his Chicago-inspired Hellenic revival. The last paper focuses on the 1964 Tokyo Olympics as a public platform for the performance and consumption of the reinvented postwar Japanese nationalism.

Paul Droubie, Manhattan College

*Nationalism as Secular Religion at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics*
Religion and Popular Culture Group (A18-129)

Shanny Luft, University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, Presiding
Theme: Reimagining Secularization Theory in the Study of Religion and Popular Culture
Sunday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

What do Star Trek’s Q Continuum, Tim Tebow, The Jim Bakker Foodbucket Fanpage, and train trips through Mormon country have in common? This paper session will assert that all are good places to reexamine the way scholars reckon with secularization theory and popular culture. In classic secularization theory, popular culture was conceived as an important venue for a larger “turf war” between religious and secular values. Insofar as secular and religious discourses were deemed separate and antagonistic, popular culture, in its most prevalent forms, fostered secularization via direct challenge, distraction, or displacement. Of course the past few decades have not been kind to the classic formulation, as all manner of “strong religions” have proven resilient. How useful then, is secularization theory for scholars who study religion and popular culture? In varied ways, the four presentations will offer a continuing role for secularization theory, albeit in critically engaged and revised forms.

David Walker, Yale University
Railroading Rituals: Mormons and Tourists in the American West
Jeffrey Scholes, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
Relating Sports and Religion in a Post-Secular World
Brandon White, Emory University
Secularized Starfleet?: Religion in Popular (Sci-Fi) Conceptions of the Future
Denis Bekkering, University of Waterloo
Unfaithful Fans of Televangelists: Between Recreational Christianity and Antifandom

*Religion and Politics Section (A18-106)*

Robert Shedinger, Luther College, Presiding
Theme: Contesting the Definition of Religion in Global Contexts
Sunday - 9:00 AM-11:30 AM

Zubair Ahmad, University of Johannesburg
Constructing a Secular-, State- and Democracy-friendly Islam from Within?
Stephen Martin, King's University College
Contesting Secular Space: the Anglican Church in South Africa and the Post-Apartheid State
**Exploratory Sessions (A18-232)**

Per Smith, Boston University, Presiding  
Theme: *Irreligion, Secularism and Social Change*  
**Sunday - 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**

Scholars of religion from a variety of disciplines are increasingly focusing their attention on the relationship between the religious and the secular. So what would a sustained discussion of “the secular” look like within the American Academy of Religion; and moreover, how would such a discussion be relevant to religious studies? This exploratory session seeks to provide modest answers to those questions by example. On the heels of the year of the protestor, the session explores how “the secular” is implicated in and affected by social transformations. How did social change make the secular possible? How have the demands of 20th century social movements shaped emergent forms of secularism? How do contemporary social movements provide fertile soil for secular theologies of resistance? And how are contemporary irreligious identities evolving within a social context that considers them deviant?

Daniel Silliman, University of Heidelberg  
*The Possibility of Secularity and the Material History of Fiction*

Petra Klug, University of Leipzig  
*The Dynamics of Standardisation and Deviance using the Way U.S. Society deals with Atheists as an Example*

Jordan Miller, Salve Regina University  
*Occupying Absence: Political Resistance and Secular Theology*

**Responding:**  
Jonathan VanAntwerpen, Social Science Research Council

**Law, Religion, and Culture Group (A18-268)**

Kathleen Sands, University of Hawaii, Presiding  
Theme: *Cultural History of Church-State Jurisprudence in the United States*  
**Sunday - 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM**

This session places Church-State jurisprudence within its broader cultural history in the period since World War II. The first paper examines the Supreme Court’s various historical renditions of James Madison, and questions the Court’s deployment of Madison to authorize its own actions. The second analyzes the alliance between neo-orthodox Protestants and Roman Catholics in support of accommodationism, thus adding a Protestant-Catholic affinity to the well-recognized Protestant anti-Catholicism that shaped American separationism. Finally, the third paper explores implicit definitions of religion within the Hosanna-Tabor v. EEOC opinions, uncovering resonance between the Court’s approaches to religion and the structuralist, functionalist, and critical definitions that are found within the academic study of religion.

Michael Graziano, Florida State University
Manufacturing Madison at the Supreme Court: Judicial Opinion as Historiographical Argument
K. Healan Gaston, Harvard University
Neo-Orthodox Protestants, Church-State Relations, and the Discourse of Secularism
Mark Storslee, University of Virginia
Hosanna-Tabor v EEOC and the Problem of Defining Religion; or, Who Got Clarence Thomas to Read Talal Asad?

Responding:
Eric Michael Mazur, Virginia Wesleyan College

*Sociology of Religion Group*

Rebekka King, University of Toronto, Presiding
Theme: Sociology of Public Religion: A Global Perspective
Sunday - 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

This session brings together papers that use sociological approaches to examine public expressions of religion around the world and within diverse religious traditions. The panel examines the ways in which religion and religious identity are negotiated and mobilized in indirect or mediatory forums, discussing the tensions between the sacred and the secular in the contexts of legislation, digital games, web forums, and newspapers. The case studies include examples from the United States, Europe, and Asia,

James Crossley, University of Sheffield
Sly Secularism? Or, How the British Media Copes with ‘Religion’

**Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Group** (A18-320)

Jorunn Buckley, Bowdoin College, Presiding
Sunday - 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

This panel takes as its starting point the arguments made in Jacques Berlinerblau’s How to be Secular: A Call to Arms for Religious Freedom. The four invited scholars will be asked to reflect on the main components of the author’s argument starting with his attempt to renovate the definition of the term along lines suggested by his reading of Martin Luther, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Respondents will also assess How to Be Secular’s claim that American secularism as we know it today came into its own in the mid-twentieth century. It was there that it experienced a brisk three decades of judicial growth and cultural expansion cresting in the 1960s. Berlinerblau’s analysis of the factors that caused the downfall of American secularism starting with the religious revival the 1970s will be discussed as will his 12
propositions for reinvigorating the valuable, albeit imperfect, philosophy of governance which secularism is.

The four distinguished respondents are Will Arnal, Regina University; Susan Thistlethwaite, Chicago Theological Seminary; Kathryn Lofton, Yale University; Wilfred McClay, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. More than half of the session will be devoted to enhanced discussion among the audience and the participants

**Panelists:**
William Arnal, University of Regina
Susan Thistlethwaite, Chicago Theological Seminary
Kathryn Lofton, Yale University
Wilfred McClay, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

**Exploratory Sessions (A18-330)**

Mary-Jane Rubenstein, Wesleyan University, Presiding
Theme: *The Affective Turn in Religious Studies*
Sunday - 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Across the humanities, a number of disciplines have recently undergone what Patricia Clough has called the "affective turn," a new interest in the political, cultural, and social modes of embodied, precognitive forces. Emerging out of the late Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s poststructuralist reading of psychologist Silvan Tomkins, "affect theory" orients the humanities to the priority of affect over drives, cognition, and language. In the words of Sedgwick and her collaborator Adam Frank, there is a "crucial knowledge" missed when linguistic constructs are taken to be the "final word" of embodied experience without reference to prelinguistic emotions. This session considers the significance of the affective turn for religious studies, investigating how affect theory can be used to ask new questions from different perspectives within the field.

Donovan Schaefer, Le Moyne College
*What Does It Feel Like to Be an Atheist? Affective Disciplines of Belief and Disbelief*

**Beyond the Boundaries (A18-336)**

Theme: Religion and Politics
Sunday - 6:00 PM-8:00 PM

The AAR is committed to fostering the public understanding of religion. Inspired by this goal, the Graduate Student Committee has organized two evenings of public talks in Chicago. Student members will present their cutting-edge research in these innovative evening sessions designed to move our discussions of religion out of the traditional academic setting of the Annual Meeting and into the community. This year’s talks center around two themes:
*Religion and the Social Sciences Section (A19-108)*

Ann McClenahan, Independent Scholar, Presiding  
Theme: *Community Organizing and Religious Responses to Economic Inequality*  
Monday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

This paper session includes presentations on different forms of community organizing and cultural creativity that emerges in response to situations of economic inequality. The papers offer a variety of methodological approaches to the study of the interplay of race, religion, and nationality in the emergence of creative responses to situations of economic inequality.

Matt Sheedy, University of Manitoba  
“*Rhetoric, Ritual, and Power: The Myths of the Occupy Movement and the Public 'Uses' of Reason.*”

*Arts, Literature, and Religion Section (A19-103)*

Larry Bouchard, University of Virginia, Presiding  
Theme: *The Post-Secular Turn: Rethinking Theory and Method in Religion and Literature*  
Monday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

This panel seeks to offer renewed assessments of "religious and literary" uncertainties in the current postsecular moment. Broadening our scope beyond the all-too-familiar Euro-American context, we start with two early modern case studies and then discuss two literary concepts in the modern period. Topics range from John Foxe's (1517–1587) chronicles of the deaths of dissenters in Elizabethan England, Li Zhi's (1527–1602) creative employment of Confucian and Buddhist vocabularies in his commentaries on historical biographies, dramas, and vernacular novels in late imperial China, the concept of irony as a critical tool for imagining intersections of African American religious and literary expression, and Margaret Atwood's conceptualization of "wonder tales" that embrace science fiction, fantasy, and other variations of the realist novel per se. Together we investigate the discursive formations and transformation of religion and literature and raise this question in particular: Where can (or must) the field go, particularly given the fractiousness of its current formation?

**Panelists:**  
David Anderson, University of Oklahoma  
Ying Zhang, Ohio State University
Contemporary Islam Group (A19-117)

Danielle Widmann Abraham, James Madison University, Presiding
Theme: Negotiating Islam and the State
Monday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

The modern nation-state remains a dominant feature in the ongoing formation of religious communities and practices across the globe. The state stands as a guarantor of the secular and can therefore mediate religion through law, public policy, and formal ideology. The papers in this panel consider the ways in which various aspects of the state simultaneously form, and are formed by, diverse Muslim communities. Presenters explore the shifting boundaries between gender, civil law and Islamic law in Indonesia; the gender bias of religious policies related to Muslim immigrants in Canada; the philosophical investigation of ethics and the secular; and the engagement of minority Shi’a ‘ulama with the Pakistani state. By chronicling the ways in which Muslims as citizens of diverse countries attempt to negotiate the direction and effects of the state, we see how the formation of religious subjects co-emerges with the formation of the state.

Mohamad Nasir, Graduate Division of Religion, Emory University
*Muslim Women Claiming Divorce at an Indonesian Religious Court: Islamic Law, Domination and Resistance*
Janis Lee, Vanderbilt University
*Religion, Secularism, and Muslim Minorities in Canada*
Samuel Kigar, Duke University
*Taha Abdurrahman and Ethics Beyond the Secular*
Mashal Saif, Duke University
*Pakistani Shi’a ‘Ulama: Theorizing the State and Contesting Religious Authority*

Responding:
Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, Reed College

Cultural History of the Study of Religion Group and Religion, Media, and Culture Group (A19-119)

Amy Koehlinger, Oregon State University, Presiding
Theme: A Fabulous Rumor: Critical Interpretations of John Lardas Modern’s Secularism in Antebellum America (University of Chicago Press, 2011)
Monday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

John Lardas Modern’s monograph, Secularism in Antebellum America (University of Chicago Press, 2011), offers an experimental account of the secular imaginary at mid-century and the emotion and mood that defined it. Reconsidering the techniques of personal agency, which
scholars of secularization have used to mark the modern transformation of religion into proliferative expressions of individual belief, the book proffers that secularism is about something different; it is about “a choice being made before it presents itself as such. Unseen somethings haunting the day.” Secularism manufactured in its own loom a ready-made religiosity of “true religion,” presenting it as common sense, a naturalized reality. This panel considers the implications of that claim for the study of religion, the metaphysics of secularism, and the bodies and materials possessed by both.

Panelists:
Chad Seales, University of Texas
Finbarr Curtis, University of Alabama
Richard Callahan, University of Missouri
Kathryn Lofton, Yale University
Paul Christopher Johnson, University of Michigan

Responding:
John Lardas Modern, Franklin and Marshall College

*Study of Islam Section (A20-111)*

Arvind-Pal Mandair, University of Michigan, Presiding
Theme: *The Translation of the Concept of Religion into Islamic Discourses*
Tuesday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

This panel asks how the conceptual and theoretical tool park established by the (world) religion discourse has affected Islam. In particular we are interested in the issue of translation of concepts from (world) religion discourses into discourses about Islam. We ask how concepts formed outside of the Islamic discursive universe (such as religion, ethics, morality, ritual, mysticism, law, orthodoxy/heterodoxy, heresy, syncretism, secularism/secularity) are re-signified when integrated into the language of Islam. Drawing on empirical research in various intellectual and geographical contexts (Egypt, Turkey, North America, Europe), the panel brings together critical perspectives on how modern notions of religion have entered and continue to impact on Muslim and non-Muslim discourses on Islam. The aim is to enhance our understanding of the politics of language and power at work in the modern study of Islam as well as, more broadly, in the larger study of religion.

Alexandre Caeiro, Qatar Foundation
*Concepts of Religion and Secularism in Minority Fiqh Discourse*

*Philosophy of Religion Section (A20-107)*

Andrew Chignell, Cornell University, Presiding
Theme: *Leibniz and His Legacy in the Philosophy of Religion*
Tuesday - 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM
The past few years have seen a resurgence of interest in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and his many contributions to the philosophy of religion. Moreover, the year 2010 marked the 300th anniversary of the publication of Leibniz's *Theodicy*, the only book-length treatise that he published during his lifetime. Building on the recent attention given to the *Theodicy*, this papers session examines a number of important issues in Leibniz’s philosophy of religion, including his distinctive metaphysics, his understanding of divine and human freedom, and his strategy for making sense of evil. Drawing on the *Theodicy* as well as Leibniz’s other works, the papers also shed light on how Leibniz’s thinking connects with that of other seventeenth-century thinkers, such as Spinoza, and how Leibniz helped to animate the work of later, equally influential thinkers on religion, including Lessing, Kant, and

Douglas McGaughey, Willamette University

*Theodicy, Skepticism, and Superstition in the Enlightenment*