

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN STUDIES GRADUATE PROGRAM

Seton Hall University



**JCST
Annual
Newsletter**

**2021
Volume**

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Seton Hall University
400 S. Orange Avenue
South Orange, NJ 07052

M.A. in Jewish-Christian Studies
Director, Rabbi Alan Brill, Ph.D.
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LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Rabbi Alan Brill, Ph.D.

This is my first semester as the Director of the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program and my first director's message in the newsletter.

We had a very productive year in 2021. Our biggest news is that faculty have been creating online access to our program. We will have two online courses starting in Spring 2022 and four total courses for a complete plan of study in order to obtain the Certificate in Jewish-Christian Studies, which meets the New Jersey mandate for K-12 education about the Holocaust and genocide.

The first four online courses includes the required course, *Christian-Jewish Encounter* (JCST 6001), as well as *Peace and War: Biblical and Jewish Perspectives* (JCST 7036); *Philosophic Perspectives on the Shoah* (JCST 7047); and *Encountering Other Religions* (JCST 7544). In future years, we plan on increasing our online course offerings.

Another piece of big news is that we have hired Rachel Slutsky, Ph.D. as the newly appointed Monsignor John Oesterreicher Visiting Assistant Professor, specializing in Jews/Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations in late antiquity at Seton Hall University. We plan on featuring Dr. Slutsky and her research in the next newsletter when she arrives to teach in Fall 2022.

I invite you to read about our latest graduate, new students and faculty research in the pages below. You'll also note three JCST alumni accomplished great things in 2021. Their stories should serve as encouragement to those without the current academic background interested in graduate work to know that our program will prepare them for continued graduate work on the highest level.

As we look ahead to 2022, we are starting an extensive outreach and marketing campaign of the JCST graduate program so that more people know about our hidden gem of a program. We seek to increase enrollment and also plan on upgrading our website to keep people informed about the past, present and future of the program. We also hope to publish the entire list of JCST alumni online so that they receive the praise they deserve.

In closing, I would like to thank Father Lawrence Frizzell for his many years of serving as graduate director of the JCST program and his general dedication to the JCST program.

CONGRATULATIONS, SISTER ROBERTHA, M.A.



We are proud of **Sister Robertha Mmole** who graduated from the program and earned her Master of Arts in Jewish-Christian Studies in 2021!

An African Benedictine Sister of Our Lady Help of Christians, Sister Mmole will continue to fulfill her congregation's call to "respond to the critical needs of society with emphasis on the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed."

WELCOME, NEW STUDENTS

The JCST Graduate Program is pleased to welcome **Ms. Janet Greve** and **Reverend Paul Shirima!**

Ms. Grieve hails from South River, NJ. She earned a bachelor's degree in Secondary English from Kean University.

Fr. Shirima joins us from Tanzania, Africa where he earned his Bachelor of Theology from St. Charles Lwanga Segerea Senior Seminary in Dar Es Salaam (affiliated with Urbaniana University in Rome) and a Bachelor of Philosophy from St. Anthony Major Seminary in Ntungamo, Bukoba.

We look forward to the unique insights each will bring to the program and their fellow classmates as they further develop their academic specialties and interests.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Sister Caroline Mbonu, Ph.D. (University of California, Berkeley) has been appointed Head of the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies in the University of Port Harcourt (UPH), Nigeria.



Dr. Mbonu, a member of the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus, graduated from the JCST program in 2004. She now supervises the work of 18 faculty members in programs for 400 undergraduates and forty graduates; she continues to teach New Testament courses and supervises research of the graduate students.

In addition to her work at UPH, Sister Caroline is very active in her pastoral engagement, which in part focuses on advancing the holistic development of rural women in local villages.

ALUMNI UPDATES (CONTINUED)

On an annual basis, Dr. Mbonu and her small group of volunteers raise funds and organize free health drives. They also empower women economically by helping facilitate economic transformation at the grassroots level through interest-free loans that help improve women's trade and agricultural productions.

Congratulations on your many accomplishments, Sister Caroline! May your diligence continue to guide young people in broadening their understanding and increasing their collaboration in the pursuit of wisdom.



Reverend Linda Bryce graduated from the JCST program in 2004 and moved to the State College campus of Pennsylvania State University, where she joined the faculty and became an ordained minister. She taught an undergraduate course on the *Shoah* and continued her study of the Holocaust in Israel under the auspices of Seton Hill's National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education.

From 2005 until 2013 Rev. Bryce made several trips to Europe for immersion in Holocaust studies and was selected for advanced study at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Recently Linda published *The Courage to Care: Being Fully Present with the Dying* (Capucia Publishing, 2021). Congratulations on this contribution to a delicate area of service that all of us face at certain times!



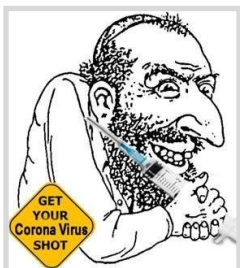
Todd Whelan, Ph.D. recently defended his doctorate dissertation, which was approved without any needed revisions, at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley in the field of the historic (and cultural) study of religion. Dr. Whelan's dissertation, entitled "Under the Dome of Saint Paul: Jews and Indians in the Protestant Imagination of the British Atlantic World, 1649-1738," focuses on the Christian theological approaches to the human difference in the Early Modern Atlantic World.

Todd, who completed the Master of Arts in JCST in 2011, is the seventh graduate of our program to obtain a doctorate in the field in the last fifteen years.

Congratulations on your continued academic excellence, Dr. Whelan! We are proud of the scholarly contributions you have made to our field of study.

ANTISEMITISM - NEW COURSE

In light of the recent unfortunate uprise in global antisemitism with attacks upon Jews coming from all directions, Professor Brill will be offering a new course on the history of antisemitism from antiquity to today. The course will be useful for all those who have to confront antisemitism or teach about it.



This course will provide a global history of antisemitism from ancient times to the present as Anti-Judaism, Judeophobia, racial-political antisemitism and fear of the other. The long-lasting fear and animosity toward Jews that we call antisemitism constitutes the oldest continuous global tradition of hatred for any single group defined as the “Other.”

Students will explore its expressions in different time periods and countries with attention to varying political, social, economic, religious and cultural contexts. The course will look at the role that antisemitism played in antiquity, early and medieval Christendom, modern Europe and America, as well as today.

ANTISEMITISM AND THE CORONA VIRUS

For an example of this rise of antisemitism, as the coronavirus continues to surge globally, virus-related conspiracy theories are proliferating online. These antisemitic, xenophobic, hateful messages spread misplaced blame and misinformation. While some of these messages are new, many are simply old tropes repackaged for a modern pandemic.



Most notably, the online conspiracy theories portray the coronavirus as a tool for Jews to expand their global influence. Many antisemitic conspiracy theories posit that Jews have undue global influence and that they manipulate events to expand their power. There has been a surge in messages that Jews manufactured or spread the coronavirus to advance their global control. This is a trope that can be traced back to at least the 14th century when Jews were accused of poisoning wells in order to spread the bubonic plague.

Our program is dedicated to fighting such misinformation and rejects all forms of antisemitism. We hope this course offers teachers and everyone in the program the needed knowledge to eliminate this misinformation.

FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Rabbi Alan Brill, Ph.D.
Cooperman/Ross Endowed Chair of Jewish-Christian Studies
Director, Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program
Department of Religion
Seton Hall University

Forthcoming Books

- *A Jewish View of the Trinity*, which will be published by Fortress Press in 2022

Academic Speaking

- Respondent to Gavin D’Costa, “On a Catholic Theology of Jewish Practice,” St. Leo University, St. Augustine, FL, May 9, 2021
- “On the Creation of Jewish Theology,” Jewish Theology Conference, Colgate College, Hamilton NY, October 11, 2021
- “Swastika: Interfaith Dialogue on Developing a Mutual Understanding of a Symbol of Peace vs Symbol of Hate,” Parliament of World Religions, October 18, 2021
- Panel discussion of Rabbi Brill’s book, *Rabbi on the Ganges: A Jewish Hindu Encounter*, Danam Society at the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX, November 19, 2021
- “Judaism and Anatheism,” Study of Judaism Unit of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX, November 21, 2021

Non-Academic Speaking

- “Rabbi on The Ganges’ A Jewish Hindu Encounter,” Aquarian Minyan, Berkeley , CA, February 13, 2021 and Congregation Bnai Yeshurun, February 16, 2021
- “Why are Jews attracted to eastern Religions?” Jewish Psychedelic Summit, May 2, 2021
- “The Lubavitcher Rebbe as a Modern Jewish Thinker,” Shaar Hakavvanat Synagogue, May 16, 2021
- “Judaism and Religious Diversity,” SPHDS, Sacramento, CA, May 27, 2021
- “Rabbi Zadok of Lublin,” The Polish Tisch, Warsaw Poland, June 6, 2021
- “Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of al Azhar:A Jewish Perspective,” Foundation for Religious Diplomacy (Baskerville Institute), May 19, 2021

Rabbi Brill also remained active on Twitter [@kavvanah](#) and on his blog, *The Book of Doctrines and Opinions: notes on Jewish theology and spirituality*, which you can follow [here](#).

FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)



Reverend Lawrence E. Frizzell, D.Phil.
Associate Professor, Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program
Department of Religion
Seton Hall University
Director, Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies

Book Reviews

- Adam Gregerman, *Building on the Ruins of the Temple: Apologetics and Polemics in Early Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016) in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 83:1 (January 2021) pp. 140-142
- Maria Chiara Riolo, *A Liminal Church: Refugee, Conversions and the Latin Diocese of Jerusalem, 1946-1956* (Leiden Brill, 2020) in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (Boston College) (1st ed., vol. 16) pp. 1-3

Academic Presentation

- "Catholic-Jewish Relations," Newman Theological College (Edmonton, Canada), Zoom, April 14, 2021

Non-Academic Presentations

- "Vatican II," Oak Knoll, Zoom, October 5, 2021
- "Psalm 23," South Orange Public Library, Zoom, August 20, 2021
- "Good Shepherd Community," Oratory Prep, South Orange, NJ, Google Meet, February 26, 2021
- "Interfaith Relations," South Orange Library, Zoom, December 18, 2021

University Service (Department of Religion)

- Evaluator, Merit Committee, June 2021
- Program Director, Graduate Program in Jewish-Christian Studies, 2010 - June 30, 2021
- Committee Member, Search Committee-Oesterreicher Visiting Chair, January 2021 - April 2021

Public Service

- Committee Member, Interfaith Commission, Archdiocese of Newark, 1980 - Present
- Organizer, WSOU Radio, *The Kinship of Catholics & Jews*, 1990 - Present

You can follow Father Frizzell on his blog at <http://blogs.shu.edu/lawrencefrizzell/blog> and on Twitter [@FatherFrizzell](https://twitter.com/FatherFrizzell).

2022 JCST SPRING COURSE SCHEDULE

JCST 6011 - Biblical Thought II: Paul and John

Wednesday 6:15 pm - 8:35 pm
Reverend Lawrence Frizzell, D.Phil.

JCST 6022 - Judaism in the Second Temple Period

Tuesdays 6:15 pm - 8:35 pm
Reverend Lawrence Frizzell, D.Phil.

JCST 7036 - Peace and War: Biblical and Jewish Perspectives

Online Course
Reverend Lawrence Frizzell, D.Phil.

JCST 7544 - Encountering Other Religions

Online Course
Rabbi Alan Brill, Ph.D.

JCST 7556 - Antisemitism

Monday 5:00 pm - 7:10 pm
Rabbi Alan Brill, Ph.D.

JCST 9001 Thesis

To be determined

You can access the current schedule [here](#) and can find detailed course descriptions of these and all courses in the Master of Arts in Jewish Christian Studies Program in the [2021-2022 Graduate Catalogue](#).

For questions concerning enrollment, please contact Jay Wolferman, at (973) 761-9751 or Jay.Wolferman@shu.edu.

To learn about full and partial scholarship opportunities, email JCST Director Rabbi Alan Brill, Ph.D. at Alan.Brill@shu.edu.

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