



## Science for Seminaries



Science for Seminaries Newsletter, Fall 2019

*Fostering dialogue between religious and scientific communities since 1995*

## Welcome



Welcome to the new academic year! The [Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion \(DoSER\) Program](#) is excited to advise and support the [2019 Science for Seminaries Cohort](#) as they begin integrating science into their core curricula this year.

If your seminary has not yet participated in the Science for Seminaries project and is interested in engaging at the science-religion interface, consider applying for the Science for Seminaries 2020 Cohort! We are accepting letters of interest

through October 1, 2019. More information about the application process is below.



DoSER is also pleased to welcome two new staff members to our ranks!

Katharine (Katy) Hinman, PhD, MDiv, is our new Associate Director. She received her PhD from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook in Ecology and Evolution and her MDiv at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. She is also an ordained pastor in the United Methodist Church.

McKenzie Prillaman, our new Program Assistant, graduated from the University of Virginia (UVA) in 2017 with a bachelor's in neuroscience and a minor in bioethics.

Dr. Hinman and Ms. Prillaman are excited to work with you at the interface of science and religion.

## Upcoming Applications

### **August 13 - October 1, 2019: Call for Letters of Interest open for the 2020 Seminary Cohort**

DoSER, in partnership with the [Association of Theological Schools \(ATS\)](#), is seeking Letters of Interest (LOIs) from ATS member seminaries interested in expanding the role that science plays in theological education. A select number of LOI applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal in the fall of 2019. Cohort members must integrate science into at least 2 core courses, host at least 1 campus-wide science-themed event, and commit to sustainability beyond the length of the project.

Visit [www.ScienceforSeminaries.org](http://www.ScienceforSeminaries.org) for more information and to apply.

**January 21 - April 28, 2020: Applications open for the 2020 Faculty Enrichment Summer Workshop**

## Project Highlights

The cornerstone of the Science for Seminaries project is assisting a diverse group of seminaries as they integrate science into their core curricula. Sixteen more seminaries will be chosen to participate over the next three years, joining the 10 seminaries that have already completed a pilot program and the 16 seminaries in the midst of their project work. This quarter, we checked in with three project leaders to see what they've done so far as part of the Science for Seminaries Project.

### Bethany Theological Seminary



**Russell Haitch, Professor of Theology and Human Science**

### Kenrick-Glennon Seminary



**Ed Hogan, Academic Dean**

### Nazarene Theological Seminary



**Derek Leigh Davis, Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Enrollment**

## What are you working on for the project?

#### **Dr. Haitch:**

"Bethany revised two core courses to include science throughout the syllabus, and five other courses were revised to include a week or more of science reading and discussion. We offered four lunches featuring scientists as speakers, and six sermons preached in chapel dealt with topics related to science. We offered a three-day conference on faith and science, which was the best attended conference in years. Entitled '[Look at Life](#),' the conference looked at the start of the universe, the start of life on earth, and the start of human life

#### **Dr. Hogan:**

"1. We are integrating archaeology into our required two-semester Patristics course for first year students.  
2. We took what was formerly a two-week Holy Land retreat and pilgrimage for fourth year students and turned it into a three-week Biblical Archaeology course carried out at various sites in the Holy Land.  
3. In November we will have an all-day conference for the entire seminary community called '[Science Enhances Faith](#).' It will give our seminarians an opportunity to see scientists who take faith seriously, and

#### **Dr. Davis:**

"Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS) has integrated neuroscience into three core courses throughout our Master of Divinity curriculum. We partnered with neuroscientists to present in classes and help shape the curriculum, assuring the accuracy of the science presented. We also hosted an event in October 2018, *Youth on the Brain*, in partnership with the local agency Youthfront. This 150-person event discussed addictive behavior and its effect on youth. We will host another event this fall, *Brain Matters*, which will focus on the neuroscience behind empathy,

today (as it relates to the science of gene editing)."

theologians who take science seriously."

compassion, and humility and its impact on virtue science. Dr. Michael Spezio from Scripps College will be the plenary speaker."

### What is the primary benefit of this project?

**Dr. Haitch:**

"The project is having practical benefits. For example, by learning about the neuroscience of addiction, students are better equipped to extend pastoral care. The project is also having theoretical benefits. Students are seeing how the insights of science and theology are complementary, not competing (hence, the project title, *Binocular Vision*, after a phrase used by John Polkinghorne). Students are also getting to know scientists as people, which means they can relate the sense of wonder that motivates scientists to the sense of mystery that inspires theologians."

**Dr. Hogan:**

"Many people today, especially young people, struggle with the relationship between faith and science, thinking they have to choose one or the other. Catholic theology has always held that faith and science are complementary. But seminarians spend most of their time and energy learning the details of revelation, and almost no time and energy learning the details of science. With these changes we hope that our students will learn to 'lean into' the relationship between faith and science with greater depth. Then, when they're ordained and carrying out ministry, they can show people how faith and science can enhance each other rather than oppose each other."

**Dr. Davis:**

"The most important thing this grant has contributed to me, NTS, and our student body is connection to a broader community of scientists that has deeply enriched our culture and conversations. While a few of our faculty have dabbled in neuroscience, the opportunity to vet their understanding and content alongside scientists in the field of practice has motivated us to dig more deeply into neuroscience as a crucial subject for our students to understand. Becoming conversant in neuroscience in dialogue with this new constituency has challenged and enriched us all and will undoubtedly continue in the future."

## Science in the Curriculum Faculty Enrichment Retreat

At the end of July, DoSER hosted a Science in the Curriculum Faculty Enrichment Retreat in Salt Lake City, UT. Representatives from seventeen seminaries from across the country joined scientific and theological experts to engage across denominations and discuss and reflect on a variety of scientific topics, including psychology, gene editing, astronomy, and ecology and environmental stewardship. They acquired pedagogical skills and strategies for science integration into their curricula; shared insights on how the science topics connect with their theology, community, and classrooms; and built relationships with each other and the theological and scientific communities. Participants also visited the National History Museum of Utah to learn more about how researchers collect and catalog specimens, from dinosaur bones to insects; discuss some of the logistical and ethical challenges in scientific research; and discuss how the work of science is part of the human experience. Visits such as these illustrate how seminary faculty might fruitfully collaborate with science institutions in their area.



[Read the full article here.](#)

Applications for the 2020 Faculty Enrichment Retreat will open in January. Please visit the [Science for Seminars website](#) for more information.

## Other News from DoSER & AAAS

### Engaging Scientists in the Science and Religion Dialogue

This past year, six universities from across the U.S. hosted public events on science and society, workshops for scientists about science communication with religious publics, and a public engagement contest that recognizes ongoing or prospective science engagement with diverse communities. These universities were participants in the "Engaging Scientists in the Science and Religion Dialogue" (Engaging Scientists) project, organized by DoSER and the [AAAS Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology](#).



The six participating universities included [Texas State University](#), [Stanford University](#), [Howard University](#), [Vanderbilt University](#), the [University of Maryland - Baltimore County](#), and [Indiana University](#). Speakers discussed community engagement on science topics ranging from public health and climate change to astronomy and genomics. Many also shared perspectives from ethnic, religious, and other communities often underrepresented in the sciences, and how religious faith and identity often intersect with other aspects of individual worldview.

The Engaging Scientists project is exploring new directions in science engagement, particularly in informal science learning (ISL) spaces such as zoos, aquariums, museums, and science centers.

[More information about the Engaging Scientists project can be found here.](#)

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### Registration is open for the 2020 AAAS Annual Meeting

The [AAAS Annual Meeting](#) will be held February 13-16, 2020, in Seattle, WA. This year's theme, Envisioning Tomorrow's Earth, will focus on our current understanding of the world, forward thinking visions for future Earth, and ways in which the scientific community can respond with discoveries and developments to help solve many pressing problems. DoSER will be hosting a reception and two symposia at the annual meeting - one on "Building Resilient Communities through Science, Religion, and Cultural Practices," and another on "Death in the 21st Century: What We Leave Behind." Topics to be explored in the second session include sustainable burial practices, social and legal dimensions of a digital "afterlife," and questions of long-term curation, access, and use of genetic data and other health information.



Please continue to check the AAAS Meetings program and the DoSER webpage for additional events where you can find us.

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### Save the Date: AAAS DoSER Annual Holiday Lecture

December 17, 2019, 5:30pm ET

AAAS Headquarters, 1200 New York Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20005

Join DoSER for our holiday lecture in Washington, DC at the AAAS headquarters in December. These annual public lectures highlight forefront science topics through dialogues between scientists, ethicists, and religious leaders. This year we will bring in experts to discuss environmental stewardship and climate change and how religious communities can be engaged. Prior holiday lectures have covered a broad spectrum of topics including artificial intelligence, cooperation and creativity in human evolution, neuroscience and morality, and exoplanets and life beyond earth.

*This event will be live streamed as well as hosted live.*

More information about the 2019 Holiday Lecture will be posted soon on the [DoSER website](#). To view previous lectures, visit [DoSER's video resources](#).

## Invest in Dialogue

Did you know that DoSER is funded by the generosity of donors and grants? Supporting DoSER's vital work of facilitating conversations between scientists and religious communities is as easy as clicking the link below. Your investment will help us fortify our current engagement projects and expand our work into exciting new areas. Email us at [doser@aaas.org](mailto:doser@aaas.org) to learn more.

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