



Science for Seminaries Newsletter, Fall 2021

Fostering dialogue between religious and scientific communities since 1995

Welcome



As the days shorten and leaves (and possibly snowflakes) fall, DoSER is excited to have launched the holiday season with our popular annual holiday event! We were very pleased to host Dr. J. Drew Lanham, professor and award-winning author, and Sevim Kalyoncu, executive director of [Green Muslims](#) on December 1st for a discussion about "Belonging and Kinship with Nature." The panelists explored humanity's relationship with nature and how diverse faith groups, local organizations, and individuals can support inclusive engagement with the natural world and conservation efforts. A recording of the December Dialogues will be available on [our website](#) soon.

DoSER has continued to build relationships and expand its work throughout the summer. In addition to 8 new Science for Seminaries participant schools, we are working with 11 additional seminaries as part of a Science for Seminaries Seed Grant Initiative and a growing number of seminaries as part of an Engaging Climate Change in Seminary

Curricula Initiative. We are very pleased to work with these schools for the 2021-2022 academic year as they integrate science into their core curricula and host events on science-religion topics.

Please follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates on upcoming events, new publications, and other announcements. Our videos, syllabi, articles, and other resources can be viewed on our websites, [aaas.org/doser](#) and [ScienceReligionDialogue.org](#). We look forward to seeing you again at future events, including the [2022 AAAS Annual Meeting](#), either virtually or in person.

– Jennifer Wiseman, Director, AAAS DoSER

New Grants to Support Science Engagement in Faith Communities



DoSER is pleased to host two new initiatives focused on incorporating science into theological education.

The Science for Seminaries Seed Grant Initiative, funded by the John Templeton Foundation, has provided one year of flexible funding to more than 10 seminaries accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). The goal is to help students and faculty members feel more comfortable when interacting with science and technology topics and to build capacity for these schools to incorporate science more deeply into their theological education. Science topics to be covered include neuroscience, biochemistry, racism and public health, epigenetics, community health and well-being, digital technology, and mathematics. Schools participating include Drew Theological School; Fuller Theological Seminary; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; Holy Apostles College and Seminary; John Leland Center for Theological Studies; Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Zygon Center; Mount Angel Seminary; Providence Theological Seminary; Regis College; Virginia Theological Seminary; and Wycliffe College.

[Read more about the 2021 Seed Grantees](#)
[List of the 2021 Seed Grants](#)

DoSER is also hosting the Engaging Climate Change in Seminary Curriculum Initiative for one year, funded through a generous donation by Leslie Sternlieb. Seminaries taking part in this project receive grants to integrate climate science into at least one core course and host one campus-wide event. The goal of this grant is to help future pastors find answers to climate science-related questions and create an atmosphere in faith communities in which climate change is considered relevant and important. So far, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University and Hood Theological Seminary have been selected to take part, with more schools soon to join them!

[Learn more about Leslie Sternlieb](#)

Project Spotlight

The cornerstone of the Science for Seminaries project is a diverse and growing network of seminaries receiving expert support as they integrate science into their core curricula. 42 seminaries have now participated in the project, reaching thousands of seminary students since the project's launch in 2014. This quarter, we checked in with three of those seminaries to meet their faculty and see what they've done so far as part of the Science for Seminaries Project.

Academy for Jewish Religion



Rabbi Dr. Matthew Goldstone,
Assistant Academic Dean &
Professor of Judaic Studies

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary



Dr. Rolf Nolasco, Jr. Rueben P. Job
Professor of Spiritual Formation &
Pastoral Theology and **Dr. Wonhee**
Anne Joh, Professor of Theology &
Culture

Hood Theological Seminary



Dr. Sharon Grant, Associate
Professor of the History of
Christianity

What are you working on for the project?

Rabbi Dr. Goldstone:

"For our project, 'Bringing Science to Jewish Clergy,' we are involving a dozen scientists to plan and lecture in revised and newly created courses together with our campus-wide event. We launched the changes in fall 2021 with the course, Critical Issues in Jewish Law and Science. We anticipate offering several other immanently relevant classes this year as part of a new Science and Judaism requirement: Scientific Literacy for Clergy, Science and Biblical Imagery, and Pharmaceuticals for Clergy (this latter course blending the scientific and the pastoral). Together with our upcoming school event on 'Mindfulness, Music Therapy, and the Brain: Research that Speaks to Them Both,' these significant enhancements to our curriculum promise to foster greater appreciation for the pertinence of

Drs. Nolasco and Joh:

"As part of the course 'INT 510 - Person in Community' offered this Fall 2021, we had Dr. Jay Forsythe, Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the College of Charleston, give a lecture on the scientific exploration of human origins. Recently, a group of Ph.D. students of color, along with a few Garrett faculty, met as a reading group to discuss the beginning chapters of Ruha Benjamin's *Race After Technology*. In both settings, students and faculty evidenced a strong and deepening interest in science and religion/theology at the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, class, and more. Looking ahead to our 2022 Spring Conference on 'Human Flourishing,' we have invited Dr. Philip Kurian, Founding Director of the Quantum Biology Laboratory at Howard University, to come as our plenary

Dr. Grant:

"Upon receiving the 2021-2022 seed grant, Climate Change and Creation Care was assigned as the theme for the collaborative Families and Communities Together (F.A.C.T.) 2021 Reading, Science and Creative Expressions Summer Camp. The weeklong event featured presentations by local and national scientists on various climate change topics and how human activity is causing climate change. Participants' ages ranged from toddlers to senior citizens and everyone learned something new. In fact, the organizers of F.A.C.T. who have collaborated with us for three years said that 'this was the best summer camp they have ever had!'"

In the Spring, the HTS required course 'CHT 200 - History of Religion in the United States' will be revised

science for modern Jewish clergy among our student body and participating alumni."

speaker."

to introduce aspects of Climate Science into the various regions of the country where humans practice indigenous religions and where forms of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam were introduced in the United States."

What is the primary benefit of this project?

Rabbi Dr. Goldstone:

"We are at a moment in history when conversation with reputable science is crucial for all clergy. As a Jewish seminary at the forefront of cultivating pluralistic clergy, AJR has an obligation to impart our graduates with the scientific background they need to best serve the contemporary Jewish community. Through our Science for Seminaries project, we have begun to meet this need by developing a diverse selection of courses that integrate the scientific and the religious to provide students with crucial tools for enhancing their sacred work. We hope that this significant first step will pave the way for a more robust fusion of science and Judaism that the Academy for Jewish Religion can impart to the Jewish community more broadly."

Drs. Nolasco and Joh:

"Through this seed grant, we have been able to create and curate an opportunity for the Garrett community to engage in exploring scientific, socio-cultural, psychological, and theological ways to understand a mutual and flourishing notion of the human with forms of relationality that brings about mutual healing. We believe that engaging in this question will offer our constituents practical wisdom and collective praxis and solidarity as we seek to embody and promote racial justice and the flourishing of all."

Dr. Grant:

"The current seed grant has allowed the International Center for Faith, Science, and History (ICFSH) to offer programming that is useful for the stakeholders that comprise the surrounding community of Salisbury, NC. We anticipate the Spring course will motivate the enrolled students to envision and implement ministries with a base of scientific literacy and awareness that is responsive to the current existential threat of climate change. As a former environmental scientist who is now teaching in a seminary, I gain a personal sense of satisfaction with how my former training dovetails with my current career."

Other News from DoSER & AAAS

Registration is open for the 2022 AAAS Annual Meeting



EMPOWER WITH EVIDENCE

#AAASmtg
ANNUAL MEETING

The next [AAAS Annual Meeting](#) will occur February 17-20, 2022 as a hybrid meeting in Philadelphia, PA and online. This year's topic, "Empower with Evidence," will feature groundbreaking trans- and multi-disciplinary research that will help us understand and hopefully resolve many of the problems facing humanity. The meeting will highlight new initiatives in advocacy, education, and policy to address how science and its practitioners can confront misinformation about science and technology. Participants will also discuss more equitable and inclusive practices so that science might truly serve and support all people.

DoSER is pleased to host multiple events at the Annual Meeting. We are hosting a virtual workshop on Science Communication and Engagement with People of Faith on Friday, February 18, from 11:00 – 11:45am ET. On Friday, February 18 from 5:30 - 7:00pm ET, we are co-hosting an in-person reception with the [AAAS Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology](#). Additionally, on Saturday, February 19 from 2:00 - 2:30pm ET, we are facilitating a virtual discussion about science-faith engagement. Registration for the Saturday discussion will be on a first-come basis with limited attendance. Please continue to check the program and DoSER's website for events where you can find us.

[More information about DoSER's workshop](#)
[Learn more and register for the AAAS Annual Meeting](#)

2021 December Dialogues: "Our Connections to the Land Run Deep:" Belonging and Kinship with Nature

On December 1, 2021, DoSER hosted our annual and popular holiday event. Previously named the "Holiday



BELONGING AND KINSHIP WITH NATURE

Lecture,” we modified the format and are now calling them the “December Dialogues,” as having a conversation is much more engaging for both speakers and audience.

The topic of this year's virtual event was "Belonging and Kinship with Nature." Panelists included Dr. J. Drew Lanham, professor at Clemson University and author of *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature* and Sevim Kalyoncu, executive director of [Green Muslims](#). DoSER's associate director, Dr. Katy Hinman, moderated the discussion. The

presenters considered questions such as, how can individuals and communities recognize and deepen their connections to the natural world? What forms can these relationships take, and how do they relate to physical, mental and spiritual well-being? What historical and contemporary barriers to engagement must be acknowledged and addressed, so that natural spaces and efforts to enjoy and conserve them are inclusive and accessible? They also explored how diverse faith groups, other community organizations, and individuals can support and sustain positive change - whether at the scale of their cities, towns and neighborhoods, within their families, or for themselves.

If you missed the discussion, a video recording will be posted on [our website](#) soon.

Watch videos from the “Forward Together” Symposium



Thank you to everyone who participated in DoSER's 25th Anniversary Symposium, “Forward Together: Where Science, Ethics, and Religion Intersect in a Changing World.” The virtual event brought together scientific experts, science communicators, faith leaders, and practitioners to discuss engagement activities at the forefront of the science-religion dialogue. Topics included climate and environment, genetics and being human, artificial intelligence, combating racism, and increasing public trust in science. If you missed the discussion this summer, video recordings are now available on YouTube.

[Watch the videos online](#)
[Read about the symposium](#)

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 to learn more.

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Find all of AAAS DoSER's resources at **ScienceReligionDialogue.org**

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