

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
Annual departmental report for the year 2006
Submitted by Rodger Payne, Spring 2007

Faculty:

The department began the 2006 calendar year with five full professors, six associate professors, five assistant professors, two full-time instructors, six adjunct faculty, and three faculty members who have joint (and primary) appointments with other departments. Changes to be noted include:

- Edward Song (Ph.D. University of Virginia) joined the department in fall 2006 at the rank of assistant professor as a specialist in moral and political philosophy. He replaces James Taylor who resigned from LSU in 2005.
- Alison Denham, a Senior Lecturer and Tutor at St. Anne's College, Oxford University, joined the faculty as a visiting professor in fall 2006. As a specialist in ethics (theoretical and applied) as well as aesthetics, she has helped us to compensate for the loss of Kevin Elliott, who left LSU at the end of the spring 2006 semester.
- Jon Cogburn was promoted to the rank of associate professor with tenure during the fall 2006 semester.
- Reem Meshal successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation at the Institute for Islamic Studies at McGill University in December 2006. She was officially awarded her Ph.D. in early 2007.
- Shirley Sands (adjunct instructor) resigned from LSU to assume the position of Executive Director of the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra. Camille Bradstreet was appointed as an adjunct instructor during the fall semester to teach some of Sands's scheduled courses.
- Three faculty were on leave during part of the year. Husain Sarkar was given a research leave for the 2006-07 academic year as a result of his receiving an ATLAS grant to complete his book manuscript "Group Rationality in Scientific Research" (to be published by Cambridge University Press in 2007). Francois Raffoul also received an ATLAS grant to complete his book manuscript, and had already been granted a sabbatical leave for the 2006-07 academic year. He spent most of the fall 2006 semester in France. John Whittaker continued his sabbatical leave during the spring 2006 semester, which was also the result of his receiving an ATLAS grant for the 2005-06 academic year.

Courses, curricula and teaching:

- The Letter of Intent to restore the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies was approved by the Board of Regents in January 2006. A post-Katrina moratorium prevented submission of the new program until 2007, but over the course of 2006 the departmental faculty compiled a complete proposal for the BA in Religious Studies and an attendant revision of the existing BA in Philosophy.

- New courses added to the departmental offerings include REL 3002 Modern Catholicism; REL 4301 Theories of Religion; PHIL 2053 History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy; PHIL 3950 Introduction to Epistemology; PHIL 4950 Advanced Epistemology. HIST 4098 Muslims in South Asia was cross-listed as an REL course.
- Seven faculty served on a total of twenty-one committees for comprehensive examinations or graduate thesis/dissertation defenses. Although this figure includes committees for the MA in Philosophy, faculty also served on committees in English, History, Liberal Arts, Political Science, and Theater, among other disciplines.
- Teaching Awards. Two members of the faculty received the indicated teaching awards during the 2006 calendar year: Husain Sarkar (Tiger Athletic Foundation Award), Ed Henderson (Doc Ambrorski Award for Honors Teaching).
- Husain Sarkar served as the advisor for an Honors Thesis; and Jon Cogburn and Jeff Roland served on Honors Theses committees (Roland was on two). Three faculty members offered HNRS courses or participated in the large team-taught HNRS during 2006. Two members of the faculty developed new HNRS courses: HNRS 2013 C. S. Lewis and the Oxford Christians (Ed Henderson), and HNRS 3030 The Synoptic Gospels (Delbert Burkett).
- Numerous members of the faculty offered a variety of independent studies to students.
- Five M.A. students successfully completed their programs in Philosophy.

Faculty research, publications and participation in academic conferences

- Nine articles appeared in peer-reviewed articles in journals or anthologies in 2006; another twelve articles were accepted for publication.
- Five faculty members are actively engaged in completing book manuscripts.
- Departmental faculty presented a total of twelve papers at scholarly conferences. Two faculty in Religious Studies had papers accepted for the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments, which held a conference in Bangkok, Thailand, in December 2006. Gail Sutherland presented her paper, "Xena Meets Krishna: Putting Gods on Television," but Reem Meshal was unable to attend the conference because of her advanced pregnancy. Her paper was presented by her husband, Reza Pirbhai, of the LSU Department of History.

Funding:

- As noted above, two Philosophy faculty, Husain Sarkar and Francis Raffoul received ATLAS grants for completion of their respective book manuscripts.
- Charles Isbell received a \$1000 Klutznick travel grant.
- Reem Meshal is a co-principal investigator for a \$33,000 Board of Regents grant to enhance the teaching of Middle Eastern Studies at LSU.

Service to the university, the profession, and the community:

- Editorial service: Three faculty members serve on editorial boards for five different journals and academic publications. In addition, five faculty members refereed a total of ten manuscripts (six books, three articles) during 2006.
- Ian Crystal is the assistant editor for the Aristotelian Ancient Commentators Series.
- Husain Sarkar was an external reviewer for a promotion to full professor.
- John Whittaker continues to serve on the Steering Committee for the Collegium for Science and Religion at LSD, which is funded by a three-year grant from the Metanexus Foundation.
- Mary Sirridge continues to serve as a member of the Council on Research. In addition, she has served since fall 2006 on the provost search committee.
- Ed Henderson serves on the Board of the Honors College.
- Faculty are actively involved with various interdisciplinary programs in the College including Asian Studies, Jewish Studies, International Studies, Women and Gender Studies. Additionally, Charles Isbell serves as the Director of the Jewish Studies program and Gail Sutherland is the Acting Director of Asian Studies.
- Members of the Religious Studies faculty presented a number of programs for student organizations or in the LSU residence halls, including Delbert Burkett, Charles Isbell, and John Whittaker. Ed Henderson (Philosophy) continues to serve as a "faculty friend" for Laville Honors House.
- Members of the Religious Studies faculty gave public lectures in the local community, including Charles Isbell, Reem Meshal, Rodger Payne, and John Whittaker.
- Numerous faculty members were involved in preparing proposals for the recent cluster hire initiative.