



Annual meeting going online again
Proposal deadline February 28
Call for leadership candidates
and more inside

REA2022 Annual Meeting Once Again to be Online

The Steering Committee of the Religious Education Association, in consultation with the full Board of the REA, has been discussing in recent weeks how to have a productive, successful, and inclusive meeting in July given the ongoing uncertainty and challenges of the COVID19 pandemic. We have decided that for this year's meeting we will meet online one more time in order to ensure that we meet these goals.

This was a difficult decision to make. We have been working hard to implement an in-person meeting that would also have online options since last year. We are still hopeful that by this summer the global pandemic may have eased up enough to support more in-person gathering, and we had all been looking forward to engaging in the theme of "Becoming a Good Ancestor" with the vibrant creativity and support of artists and scholars local to the Twin Cities of Minnesota.

Even so, the REA Board has made the decision to remain online this July for three primary reasons: ensuring a successful meeting, providing wide inclusivity, and promoting an equally wide accessibility.

First, while we are all hopeful that we will be experiencing COVID19 and its variants differently this summer, we now have extensive experience with the ongoing uncertainties of this pandemic. We have no guarantees regarding July, nor are we clear yet about the best practices for ensuring safe gathering, providing robust support if

necessary for emergency isolation in quarantine, or even how best to document vaccination status. Further, we know that many of our international participants would have to endure significant quarantine — at their own expense — upon returning to their home countries.

We want a robust and wide-ranging conference that embodies all of the best that REA can offer. As creative educators we have learned much over the past two years about how to utilize digital resources to embody a successful online meeting. Moving to an online meeting now will allow our program committee and our small staff to continue to develop inventive and ingenious ways to connect and to learn. It also means that we will not have such a big hit to our budget, if we decide now to let go of our summer contract. Should we wait until June to do so we would have a nearly impossible task in front of us, to arrange the meeting, and we would incur enormous financial penalties for ending our university contract.

Second, given our explicit, intentional, and budgeted support for the pursuit of inclusive excellence, moving now to an online meeting will allow us to invite many of our colleagues for whom online attendance might be an easier way to join us in conversation, especially our international colleagues who have begun to participate in growing numbers. This move will also allow us to invite more graduate students, contingent faculty, retired faculty, and colleagues whose institutions' travel budgets have been cut due to COVID-related expenses.

Third, staying online for one more year will allow us to make our meeting as accessible as possible, both for the international scholars we want to invite, but also for those for whom COVID-related restrictions would prevent them from joining this year. This includes many of our members who are older or have other risk-factors that make them more vulnerable to COVID, as well as many members, often women, who have primary caretaking responsibilities for unvaccinated children and/or older or otherwise vulnerable family members.

The REA Board has not made this decision lightly, and our association is not planning on an entirely online meeting somehow becoming a new norm for our association. Next year, when we can expect lower rates of COVID overall, widespread access to vaccines for children, better treatment options for all, and different institutional realities, we plan to be back in person — while continuing to provide some options for online participation since we have known how important accessibility and inclusion are to our mission.

Finally, given the lower submissions to our call for proposals, possibly in part due to COVID-related concerns, we are re-opening the Call for Proposals with a deadline of February 28, 2022.

Mary E. Hess, PhD
REA Networking Coordinator

Call for Proposals for REA2022 deadline is February 28

Becoming Good Ancestors

Vulnerable as we are
walking together
Resilient in dialogue

The divine is co-creating

Listening to resilient generations

Our transformation

Learning Ancestor

Courageously co-creating
Transforming life

Be Courageous, resilient, alive
Making
Learning
Practicing
Finding
Co-creating

Celebrate ascending into the future
Departing, rejecting, holding, releasing
Breathing, honoring

Repeat

Celebrate ascending into the future
Departing, rejecting, holding, releasing
Breathing, honoring

Resilient transformation
Bring art in Balance

The ancestors
Are storytelling.

REA seeks proposals that expand to the possibility of the guild as demonstrated and expressed in this poem. The guild needs bold co-imagining from its membership. If our work is to matter for the future, we must go courageously together. In order to broaden the imagination of our collective voices, first we must know a few things about ourselves. Therefore, the conference committee encourages proposals addressing the following three questions:

The question of who: In your research and practice, who is religious education for? Who benefits from religious education? Be specific, explicit, and do not assume the rest of the membership knows who your work is for. We are an international guild with many different stakeholders from different types of institutions — places of worship, faith-based institutions, colleges and universities, NGO, and non-profit organizations. In this moment in time, who does religious education seek to serve? How does it transform local communities? What research is the most pressing for your context?

The question of why: Why does religious education exist in your context? Similar to who does the guild serve, why does religious education and membership in the guild matter in your context? Why will it matter in the future? What is at stake if religious education is no longer the guild for your work? Why religious education and not another category of inquiry and practice?

The question of the future: The year is 2100 and not a single one of us is an active member of the guild. What is the nature of our work? How do we gather? How do we share knowledge? What role does REA have in broader society? Be creative. Drawing inspiration from Octavia's *Brood*, we spend our meetings, journal entries, papers, and time with colleagues imagining better worlds together. Take this opportunity to imagine boldly the future we have yet to live into. Take creative risk by not just engaging the who and why questions of the guild, but how! What forms will REA be celebrating in that moment?

These topics may seem broad. They are intentionally so. Here are a few considerations for your proposal.

Co-Create. The committee will look favorably at submissions that are written by teams. They can be teams with partners you are very familiar with, or they could be written by someone from very different perspectives on the questions above.

Make. Be creative. We are accepting proposals that are creative in their approach to research interest groups, collaborative sessions, and poster sessions. Plays, short fiction, art installations, liturgies, curriculums, articles, and other forms are encouraged for every level for every type of session.

For 2022, we will be curating an art installation. Creative poster ideas will be part of that installation. If you have gifts or practice — related to REA — leveraging visual, mixed-media, performance, digital, three dimensional art, then we strongly encourage you to apply in the poster session category.

Be bold. While the theme and suggested prompts are creative and broad in nature, be bold in your proposals. Empirical, theoretical, pedagogical, and artistic proposals are all strongly encouraged. We hope to celebrate bold visions of REA's members. Honor ancestors. In your bold proposals, have a sense of what came before. Do your best to honor those who have laid the foundation upon which you now stand. Do not assume we know who your ancestors are or from what context your work generates from, and do

not presume your context is the center of the guild. When we gather, our ancestors will meet and rejoice in our gathering.

Resilience in dialogue. As stated in the poem, the guild seeks scholarship that creates boldly and generatively together. As a guild the stakes are high for very different members for a lot of different reasons. Please take this opportunity to celebrate your efforts to the guild, but do not presume they are the only valuable efforts among your peers. We have a variety of methods, approaches, and expressions of religious education within the guild. The theme is meant to be expansive enough to celebrate that diversity, as opposed to narrow its scope.

Through examining the who, our collective why, and imagining into the future, let us become good ancestors together.

Information and guidelines for submitting your proposal are all available online.

Public Scholarship in Religion and Public Education: A New England Seminar

Religious studies scholars widely support enhancing education about religion in K-12 public schools that leads to greater religious literacy and democratic pluralism. The difficulty arises when translating this support into action. Scholars quickly encounter the legal and social complexity of U.S. public education and the challenges inherent in public scholarship.

The Religious Education Association is collaborating with a number of other scholarly organizations to support a small pilot project that seeks to develop a community of practice in New England and the Canadian Maritimes dedicated to cultivating the public scholarship, knowledge, and skills necessary for religious studies scholars to collaborate effectively with public schools and educators.

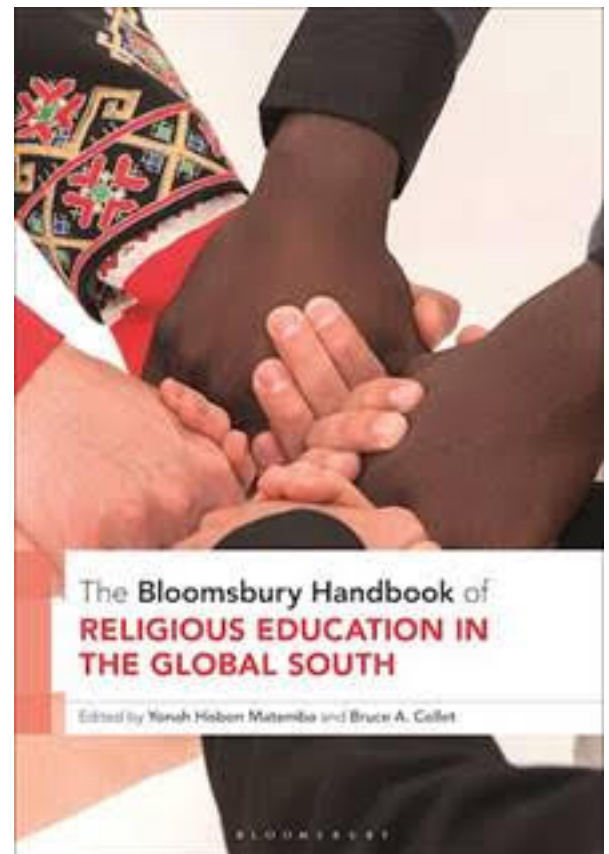
More details are available online, and the deadline to apply is February 18th.

Bloomsbury Handbook of Religious Education in the Global South published

Back in 2018 REA helped to circulate a call for chapters in a major new handbook. It has now been published, and we are pleased to note that Yonah H. Matemba (University of the West of Scotland, UK) and Bruce Collet (Bowling Green State University, USA) have co-edited The Bloomsbury Handbook of Religious Education in the Global South, which presents new comparative perspectives on religious education (RE) across the Global South.

The book includes 23 chapters written by scholars from the Global North and South, and is the first authoritative reference work on the subject. The handbook is thematically organized into seven sections. The first three sections deal with provision of RE, response of RE to changes in contemporary society, and decolonization issues in RE. The next four sections explore young people and RE, perspectives on RE teachers, RE in higher education, and finally, challenges and opportunities for RE.

The term 'Global South' is used here primarily to signify the deep economic divide with the global north but the term is also examined in historical, geographical, political, social and cultural ways, including the indelible influence of religion in all four broadly defined regions. Exploring RE from local, cross-national as well as regional and sub-regional perspectives, the handbook examines RE from its diverse past, present realities, and envisioned future revealing not only tensions, contestations, injustices and inequalities of power, but importantly, how inclusive forms of RE can help solve these problems.



Resources

What Makes Me? Core Capacities for Living and Learning is a new UNICEF report on how 'core capacities' – or cornerstones of more familiar concepts such as life skills and competences – develop over the early part of the life course, and how they contribute to children's well-being and development.

The report synthesizes the work of nine detailed working papers – covering the core capacities of 'Discerning patterns', 'Embodying', 'Empathizing', 'Inquiring', 'Listening', 'Observing', 'Reflecting', 'Relaxing', and 'Sensing' – that individually review the empirical evidence on each core capacity in the academic literature. Each working paper assesses the contribution of the core capacities and the perspectives from which they are applied – mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual – to children's well-being and development, and the practice and policies applied by adults working with children.

Building Faith is a robust website curated by Virginia Theological Seminary's program in Christian education and faith formation. It is full of articles and resources for working with children in particular, but in intergenerational work as well.

Team-building Activities in an online setting is a resource site that several REA members have recommended, given the ever growing need to find ways to develop connections in online spaces.

Restorative Justice toolkit is a set of resources curated by Learning for Justice magazine, which is a K12 resource in the US context. They have put together a great introduction to restorative justice practices in school settings.

Restorative Actions is a project begun by several US educators in the Presbyterian context who are seeking to help Christian congregations engage in reparative and restorative work, particularly as regards access to and development of financial resources. Rather than awaiting US government action on reparations, this project is helping individuals and congregations to engage both theologically and pragmatically in surrendering wealth for mutual wellbeing.

Tech in Churches project. Several members of REA are involved with a research project which is analyzing how churches have drawn on digital tech that was made available to them through a Lilly grant project. The Tech in Churches website has emerging data reports, resources, and more available for free access, as well as a free upcoming webinar on February 23 on the topic of “pandemic and pastors.” Both **Mary Hess** and **Kyle Oliver**, long time REA members, are on the Advisory Board for this project.

Member News

Darryl Stephens and Kate Ott are excited to announce that their recent book, Teaching Sexuality and Religion in Higher Education: Embodied Learning, Trauma Sensitive Pedagogy, and Perspective Transformation (Routledge Research in Religion and Education), has just been released in paperback — making it much easier to use in classes! There is a discount flyer included at the end of this e-REACH.

We are pleased to congratulate **Denise Janssen**, who was tenured and named Associate Research Professor of Christian Education and Assistant Dean at Virginia Union University.



eREACH is a newsletter of the Religious Education Association, an Association of Professors, Practitioners, and Researchers in Religious Education.

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Available to purchase with 20% discount!

Teaching Sexuality and Religion in Higher Education

Embodied Learning, Trauma Sensitive Pedagogy, and Perspective Transformation

Edited by **Darryl W. Stephens**, Lancaster Theological Seminary, USA and **Kate Ott**, Drew University, USA

Series: Routledge Research in Religion and Education

This volume combines insights from secular sexuality education, trauma studies, and embodiment to explore effective strategies for teaching sexuality and religion in colleges, universities, and seminaries. This book will be of great interest to graduate and postgraduate students, researchers, academics, and libraries in the fields of Religious Studies, Religious Education, Gender & Sexuality, Religion & Education and Sociology of Religion.

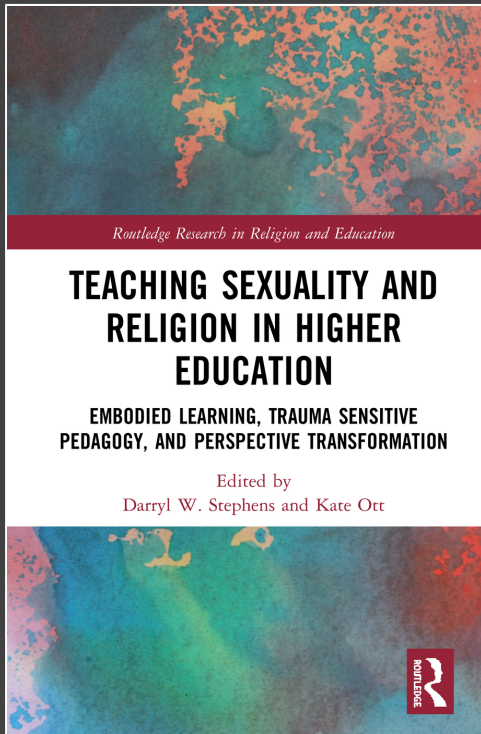
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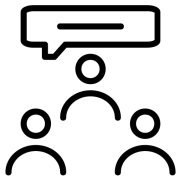
DUE FEB 18, 2022



PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP IN RELIGION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION: A SEMINAR

*Enhancing Opportunities for Collaboration Between Religious
and Theological Studies Scholars and K-12 Educators*

Religious studies scholars widely support enhancing education about religion in K-12 public schools that leads to greater religious literacy and democratic pluralism. The difficulty arises when translating this support into action. Scholars quickly encounter the legal and social complexity of U.S. public education and the challenges inherent in public scholarship. This program seeks to establish a small community of practice dedicated to cultivating the public scholarship knowledge and skills necessary for religious studies scholars to collaborate effectively with public schools and educators.



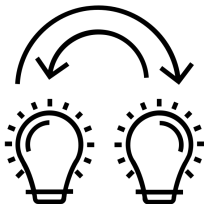
Develop a Community of Practice

Enter into a community of practice formed of religious studies scholars interested in promoting the public understanding of religion in the public school sector.



Foster Connections among Educators & Scholars

Build a network of educators and scholars in New England who are invested in enhancing education about religion in K-12 public schools.



Share Expertise

Put public scholarship knowledge and skills into practice through opportunities to share expertise with educators, preservice teachers, and education researchers.

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Details

- This program will gather together a group of up to seven doctoral students and faculty to participate in a seminar series of six training sessions including the following topics:
 - best practices for communicating their scholarly expertise for a non-academic audience
 - the current status of religion and public education in our region,
 - how scholars of religious studies and theology can contribute to enhancing the understanding of religion in the K-12 education environment.
- Seminar participants will learn from current K-12 teachers, education researchers, and other experts in the field of religion and education. Each participant will develop a public-facing product that presents their area of expertise in a manner that is accessible to K-12 educators and/or teacher educators. Teachers will be invited to coach and offer feedback on the accessibility and usefulness of this material to their classrooms.
- Registration, travel, and small stipends provided.

Eligibility

- Doctoral students, Faculty in religious studies or theology, OR Scholars working in religious studies or theology who are not full time faculty
- Located in the New England & Canadian Maritimes region (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, plus the Canadian provinces of Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island).

Timeline

- January 2022: Applications open
- March 12: Opening day-long gathering in the Boston Area
- February-May 2022: 4 Public Scholarship Seminars via Zoom
- May 21: Closing day-long gathering in the Boston Area
- June-July 2022: Opportunity for participants collaborate with local schools/districts to support teacher learning and share their expertise

What is The Religion and Education Collaborative?

- We are an interdisciplinary network of educators, students, and scholars who examine issues involving religion and education in the United States, Canada, and around the globe. The REC strives to bridge gaps between academic fields and educational arenas to promote research and initiatives on religious literacy education, relationships between religion and education, and other topics at the intersections of religion and schooling.
- The membership of the Religion & Education Collaborative includes researchers, educators, graduate students, and others whose work intersects with the topics of religion and schooling. Current membership represents over 20 U.S. states and Canadian provinces, as well as Norway, Italy, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands.

Apply Online

<https://www.religionanded.com/pspe/>

Questions?

Contact REC Director Dr. Kate Soules
ksoules@religionanded.com