

In Loving Memory of Meghna Atwal

This year's journal is dedicated to the memory of Meghna Atwal who sadly passed away on February 14th 2014 at the age of 23. Former President of the Concordia Religion Student Association, Meghna was an energetic, warm, and wonderful person. She touched many lives and her commitment to her friends, academic endeavours, and the CRSA have had a long-lasting effect in the Department of Religion. Our thoughts are with her family, friends, and anyone who had the opportunity to meet Meghna.

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A Word from the Editors

Religion: *ri'lijən* | noun: the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods. A particular system of faith and worship. A pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance. As students and scholars of Religion, sooner or later, we must face the question ‘what does *study of Religion* mean?’ Since the question is not difficult enough as it is, we also encounter THE question: “what is Religion?” The contributors and editors of this year’s *CRSA Academic Journal of Religion* are engaging with these questions, trying to understand what it means to be a religionist and what it is that we study. Correspondingly, we attempt to showcase the cutting-edge research in Religion by Concordia undergraduate community. The journal that you hold in your hands right now, however, will not provide you an answer to these two questions. This is not an apology—far from it! This journal shows the very complicated, diverse and unstable nature of Religion, and the myriad of forms and paths that the study of Religion may take.

For us, the academic study of religion is a multi-disciplinary enterprise. It involves the historical examination of religious movements, the literary analyses of their literatures, philosophical reflections on beliefs and teachings, the social scientific investigations of their rituals, practices, texts, and institutions, the psychological study of their participants and ethical inquiries regarding both their moral writings and social roles. As students in the Department of Religion at Concordia University, we are lucky to have as mentors scholars who have been trained in a variety of disciplines. These include, but are not limited to, history, sociology, anthropology, literary studies, philosophy, psychology, theology, as well as in the study of particular religious traditions. Their backgrounds have definitely shaped and coloured our approaches to the study of Religion. It is thanks to their commitment, work, and motivation that the essays in this journal were possible. So, to all professors, part-time faculty, Graduate instructors, LTAs, and TAs in the department: thank you for taking care of our intellectual development. Finally, to Professors Lynda Clarke and Marc P. Lalonde, our Undergraduate Advisors, who always make sure we are on the right track.

We are equally grateful towards Tina Montandon and Munit Merid, whose commitment to the Department, and to the students within, make our experience much more enjoyable. On behalf of the Religion undergraduate community: thank you.

To the contributors and editors, this journal is yours. Your hard work and commitment to our field is remarkable. Many of you are moving on as of next Fall. We wish you the very best in your future endeavours, we thank you for what you brought to the Department, and above all, we wish that what you learned during your Bachelor of Arts in Religion/Judaic Studies will stay with you.

Enjoy,

Concordia Religion Student Association