



Boston University Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies
Institute on Culture, Religion & World Affairs: CURA

CURA Fellows 2023-2024



Taylor C. Boas, Professor, Department of Political Science

Taylor Boas is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Boston University. He is author of [*Evangelicals and Electoral Politics in Latin America: A Kingdom of This World*](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2023). His current research project looks at how religion influences the political attitudes of Latin American migrants to the United States.



Judith Ellen Brunton, William Lyon Mackenzie King Postdoctoral Fellow, Harvard University

Judith Ellen Brunton is a scholar of religious studies and the environmental humanities, currently at Harvard University as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Canada Program at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. Judith received her PhD from the University of Toronto's Department for the Study of Religion in 2022. Her current book project takes an ethnographic and archival approach to explore how oil extraction shapes contemporary imaginaries of the good life in Alberta. This includes case studies on: Imperial Oil's publications, Energy Heritage sites, The Calgary Stampede, and various corporate aspirational initiatives in Calgary.

Judith is broadly interested in questions of energy, land and labor, secularity and enchantment, religion-making, and method in the North American West. Her next projects will expand on oil to include investigations into dowsing, ghost towns, ley lines, malls, and the rodeo, among other interests.



Nicholas Covaleski, PhD Candidate, Department of Religion

Nicholas is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Religion at Boston University. His dissertation explores the intersections of religion, public ethics, and science and technology in the United States, with a focus on the domains of space travel, genetics, and computer science. He holds Masters degrees from Harvard Divinity School and Harvard Medical School.



Jasmine English, PhD Candidate, Political Science, MIT

Jasmine English is a PhD Candidate in Political Science at MIT. Her research investigates the conditions under which groups manage to deliberate and pursue political action in the presence of racial divisions. Her dissertation uses ethnographic and statistical methods to probe this question in racially diverse churches in the United States.



Tyler J. Fuller, PhD Candidate, Department of Religion

Tyler J. Fuller is a PhD Candidate in the Religion in Philosophy, Politics and Society area of specialization in the Graduate Program in Religion at Boston University. Tyler is a sociologist of religion and a health educator. His research interests focus on the social scientific study of religion, health-seeking behaviors, and faith-based health education and promotion. Tyler holds both an MTS and an MPH from the Religion and Public Health Dual Degree Program at Emory University.



Aimee M. Genell, Assistant Professor of History, Pardee School of Global Studies

Aimee Genell is an Assistant Professor of History at the Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University (Ph.D., Columbia University). Her research focuses on the history of the late Ottoman Empire and its entanglements with Europe in the arena of international law. Her manuscript, *"Empire by Law: The Ottoman Origins of the Mandate System in the Middle East"* (under contract, Columbia University Press), traces the Ottoman roots of the post-imperial political order through an analysis of the inter-imperial contest over autonomous Egypt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



David Glovsky, Assistant Professor, Department of History

David Glovsky is Assistant Professor of African History at Boston University. He is a historian of 19th and 20th century West Africa, with a focus on Muslim parts of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea. His research looks at the development of cross-border communities between these four countries, in part due to the growing presence of Islam in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Before coming to BU, he completed his PhD at Michigan State University, and taught for two years at the University at Albany, State University of New York.



Ateeb Gul, Doctoral student (Islamic Studies), Department of Religion

Ateeb Gul is a doctoral student (Islamic studies) in the Graduate Program in Religion at Boston University. His research interests include Sirah literature (biographies of the Prophet Muhammad), Islam in South Asia, and Islamic law and legal theory. In 2020, he received the Mother Board Writing Prize from the Gender, Culture, Women, and Sexuality consortium based at MIT. In addition to his academic work, he also publishes poetry and translations of poetry.



Callid Keefe-Perry, Assistant Professor of Contextual Education and Public Theology, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

Callid Keefe-Perry is Assistant Professor of Contextual Education and Public Theology at Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry. His scholarship engages themes of public theology, critical pedagogy, moral injury, and theologies of imagination and theopoetics. His most recent book is [*Sense of the Possible: An Introduction to Theology and Imagination*](#). His current area of major research explores theological and Church-based activist responses to White Christian Nationalism in the United States.



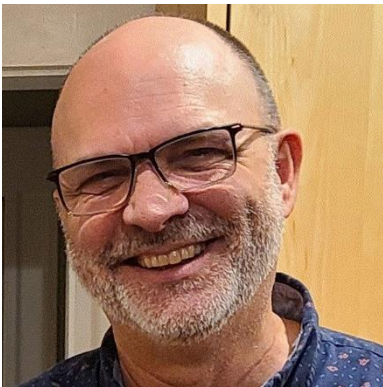
Ethan Michael Key, PhD Candidate, History

Ethan Key is a PhD candidate in History from Chattanooga, Tennessee whose area of research is in the Horn of Africa. His MA thesis at Georgia State University focused on the role of [*Onesimos Nasib*](#) as Protestant Christian teacher and translator of the Bible into afaan Oromo. His PhD research continues this research by considering multiple forms of translation - between languages, cultures, and worldviews - during the late nineteenth-century expansion and early twentieth-century consolidation of the Ethiopian Empire.



Jaira Koh, PhD Student, School of Theology

Jaira is a PhD student in theology and philosophy at Boston University. His research is interested in the critical interactions between the utopianisms of Liberation Theology and Marxist-Feminist social reproduction theory, and in theological approaches to the paradox of locating the revolutionary new in the domain of political economy which reproduces the existing. He received his M.Div from Boston University in 2021, and his B.A. in Media Studies from Pomona College in 2017. Jaira is a proud member of the Boston University Graduate Workers Union.



Lance D. Laird, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine

Dr. Laird is Assistant Director of the MS Program in Medical Anthropology & Cross-Cultural Practice. His research at Boston University has focused on multiple intersections of Muslim identity with healing professions and public health in the US. His early research on shared symbols of Muslims and Christians in Bethlehem set forth a research agenda on the “dialogue of life,” emphasizing an ethnographic approach to liberation and contextual theologies. Drawing on theories of racialization, social suffering, and identity formation, he has published on how Muslims are represented in medical literature, the emergence of Muslim free clinics and public health organizations, Muslim healthcare chaplaincy, American Muslim physician identities, the religious health assets of predominantly Black Christian and Muslim congregations, immigrant women's experience of intimate partner violence. Dr. Laird teaches courses on theory in medical anthropology, refugee and im/migrant health, religion and public health, and the formation of health professionals.



Zachary Mondesire, Assistant Professor, Pardee School of Global Studies

Zachary Mondesire's research focuses on the intersection of race, gender, and religion in Africa as well as the institutional legacy of Pan-Africanism. His teaching addresses global ideas about social, economic, and political justice. Professor Mondesire is a socio-cultural anthropologist whose work focuses on how transnational geopolitics become elements of everyday life. His regional interests span Africa and the Middle East where he has both lived and conducted extensive fieldwork – in South Sudan, Sudan, Kenya, and Tanzania.



David Siddhartha Patel, Research Fellow, Middle East Initiative, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School

Patel's research focuses on religious authority, social order, identity, and state-building in the contemporary Middle East. His book, "[*Order Out of Chaos: Islam, Information, and the Rise and Fall of Social Orders in Iraq*](#)" (Cornell University Press, 2022), examines the role of mosques and clerical networks in generating order after state collapse and is based upon independent field research he conducted in Basra. Patel's new book project, "*Defunct States of the Middle East*," chronicles the more than two dozen territorial polities that disappeared from the map of the region after 1918: how they came to be, how they died, and how they are remembered today. Patel has also published articles or chapters on the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood; ISIS; Iraqi politics; and the transnational spread of protests during the Arab Uprisings. He previously was a senior fellow and associate director for research at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University and an assistant professor of government at Cornell University. He holds a BA in economics and political science from Duke University and a PhD in political science from Stanford University.



Sarah Riccardi-Swartz, Assistant Professor of Religion and Anthropology, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Northeastern University

Sarah Riccardi-Swartz is an Assistant Professor of Religion and Anthropology at Northeastern University, where she is also an affiliate faculty member in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociocultural Anthropology from New York University. An interdisciplinary scholar, she is trained as a historian, ethnographer, and filmmaker of American religion. Broadly, her research focuses on transnational conservative politics, race, media/digital worlds, gender and sexuality, and Orthodox Christianity. She is the author of [*Between Heaven and Russia: Religious Conversion and Political Authority in Appalachia*](#) (Fordham University Press, 2022).



Attash Sawja, PhD student, Department of Religion

Attash is a Teaching Fellow and a PhD student in Islamic Studies at Boston University. His research focuses on the religious thought of Ismaili Muslims living in South Asia over the last two hundred years. He graduated with an MA in Muslim Cultures from the Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations. He is also serving as the Program Director for the College Program on Islam (CPOI) - an Ismaili community initiative for college-aged students to provide them access to a rigorous academic study of Islam.



Radha Sarkar, PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, Yale University

Radha's research interests are inspired by contemporary developments in Latin American and South Asian politics, and are centered on questions of religion and politics. She holds a B.A. in politics from Princeton University and an MSc in comparative politics from the London School of Economics.



Dane Scott, PhD Student, Department of Religion

Dane is a Ph.D. student in the Graduate Program in Religion specializing in the religions of the ancient Mediterranean. His areas of interest are Greek and Roman religions, early Christianities, contemporary paganism, and ritual and materiality theory. His particular focus is on the role of the image and visuality in shaping religious practices in the ancient world. Dane graduated summa cum laude from the College of the Holy Cross with a degree in Classics and Religious Studies.



Laura Anne Thompson, Visiting Assistant Professor, Boston University

An anthropologist of religion, Dr. Thompson specializes in Islam in North Africa and works on the intersection of affect, the law, and the sacred. Her research looks at the adjudication of historical and contemporary blasphemy cases in Tunisia. She is currently preparing her dissertation for publication and is completing an article on routine, low-level blasphemy prosecutions in present-day Tunisian tribunals. She previously taught as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Miami University and received her PhD from Harvard University in 2022.