

## Theorizing Transnational Religion & Globalization

We live in an increasingly interdependent world, a world crisscrossed by rapid flows of people, commodities, ideas, and capital, across increasingly permeable national borders. In the United States, one of the key components in the process of globalization has been the rise of transnational migration. Unlike immigrants who came to the US at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, post-1965 immigrants have the technological resources to sustain diasporic communities—dense social networks that span sending and receiving countries. This fact, together with the decline of the narrative of assimilation and the ascendance of the notion of multiculturalism, has made it possible for recent immigrants to retain their national and ethnic identities abroad. The existence of multiple collective identities, in turn, poses a challenge to the idea of America as a nation and forces us to re-think traditional notions of citizenship.

This lecture series will explore the role of transnational religion in the process of globalization, with a particular focus on its impact on US society. Religion is one of the central cultural resources that transnational immigrants bring as they seek to negotiate multiple embeddedness in host and home countries. The series will offer an opportunity for a high-level interdisciplinary dialogue around the critical issue of the changing face of religion and its role in the redefinition of identity, modernity, and nationhood in a global setting.

*Presented by the Department of Religion with support from the recent Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Horn Museum at the University of Florida.*

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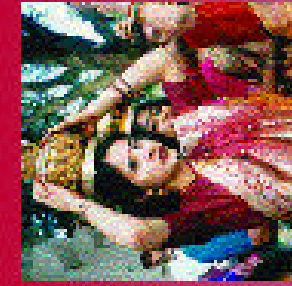
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## Religion and Diaspora

Steven Vertovec, Oxford University  
Friday, September 28, 2001, 2:00 PM  
Keene Faculty Center, Dauer Hall

Over the last ten years, there has been a proliferation of literature and a mushrooming of interest among members of ethnic minority groups as well as academics surrounding the notion of "diaspora." Historians and social scientists describe myriad facets of diaspora while an ever increasing number of self-conscious communities call themselves diasporas. Surprisingly, religion has been the focus of relatively little attention within this growing field.

Steven Vertovec will survey a range of recent literature in order to:

- 1) Outline some of the understandings of "diaspora" that have developed over the past ten years; 2) Argue that current "diaspora" concepts often suffer from conflation with "migration," "minority" and "transnationalism" and that each of these areas of study involve distinct—but related—

dynamics of religious transformation; 3) Identify some patterns of religious change in connection with each of these concepts.

Steven Vertovec is Research Reader in social anthropology at Oxford University and Director of the Research Program on Transnational Communities. He has been a visiting fellow at the Institute of Ethnology, Free University of Berlin, and the Institute of European

Ethnology at Humboldt University in Berlin. His many publications include *Hindu Trinidad: Religion, Ethnicity and Socio-Economic Change* (Macmillan, 1992); *Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns* (Routledge, 2000); and ten edited volumes on Middle Eastern and Asian transnational communities. Vertovec is also senior editor of *Global Networks*, one of the premier journals in transnational studies.



## Complex Identities in a New Religious America

Diana L. Eck, Harvard University  
Tuesday, February 12, 2002, 7:00 PM  
Chandler Auditorium, Ham Museum

The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated the quotas linking immigration to national origins. Since then, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Zoroastrians, and new varieties of Jews and Catholics have arrived from every part of the globe, radically altering the religious landscape of the United States. Members of the world's religions live not just on the other side of the world but in our neighborhoods; Hindu children go to school with Jewish children; Muslims, Buddhists, and Sikhs work

side-by-side with Protestants and Catholics. This new religious diversity is now a Main Street phenomenon, yet many Americans remain unaware of the profound change taking place at every level of our society from local school boards to Congress, and in small-town Nebraska as well as New York City.

In this lecture, Eck will explore issues around the formation of complex racial, religious, ethnic, and national identities in the United States.

Diana L. Eck is Professor of Comparative

Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard University. Eck's book *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Bonarus* (Beacon Press, 1993) won the 1994 Melcher Book Award of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the 1995 Louisville Grawemeyer Book Award in Religion. Since 1991, Eck has been heading a research team at Harvard University to explore the new religious diversity of the United States and its meaning for the American pluralist experiment. The Pluralism Project's

interactive CD-ROM, *On Common Ground: World Religions in America*, a multimedia introduction to the world's religions in the American context, was published in 1997 by Columbia University Press. Her new book, *A New Religious America* (Harper San Francisco, 2001) addresses the challenges for the United States of the new religious diversity that is now ours. In 1998, Eck received the National Humanities Medal from President Clinton.



## Global Violence, Global Religion

Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara  
Time and place: TBA Spring 2002

Beneath the histories of religious traditions—from biblical wars to crusading ventures and great acts of martyrdom—violence has lurked as a shadowy presence. Images of death have never been far from the heart of religion's power to stir the imagination. In this lecture, Mark Juergensmeyer explores the socio-political and cultural links between violence and religion in the emerging global stage. Among the cases discussed will be the World Trade Center explosion, the Hamas sub-

side bombings, the Tokyo subway nerve gas attack, and the killing of abortion clinic doctors in the United States.

Mark Juergensmeyer is a professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Director of the Global & International Studies Program. He has previously served as Dean of the School of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Studies and Professor of Religion and Political Science at the University of Hawaii, and as Director of the

Religious Studies Program at the University of California at Berkeley. Juergensmeyer has been a Fulbright Fellow in India, an International Fellow at Columbia University, a Senior Researcher at the American Institute of Indian Studies, a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His publications include *Terror in the Mind of God* (University of California



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## The Department of Religion

at the University of Florida was established in 1946 and is one of the oldest religion departments in a public university setting. Following the vision of its founder, Dalton Suedter, the department has always supported the comparative study of religion. At present, the department is home to thirteen full-time faculty

teaching and conducting research in a variety of fields, ranging from biblical and Jewish studies to Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and religion in the Americas. All faculty members participate widely in interdisciplinary programs and are accomplished scholars in their fields. Visuddha Narayanan is currently president of the American Academy of Religion. The department offers an undergraduate minor and major as well as Master of Arts in Religion. In 2003, the department will inaugurate a doctoral program with three specializations: Religion in the Americas, Religions of Asia, and Religion and Ecology.