

PHILOSOPHY & RELIGIOUS STUDIES CHRONICLE

we've been teaching, learning, and building, let's catch you up...



Student Spotlight: Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to Cristiane Aya Richardson '27 (left), a Religious Studies minor, who received this year's Norman Rates Scholarship and Rebekka Henry '27 (right), a Religious Studies major, who won the AY2025–2026 Chamberlain and Lucinda Scripture Reading Contest.

QUICK UPDATES

* Teaching Philosophy in the South

April 10, 2026 @ 4PM

A panel in celebration of, Drs. Gertrude Allen and Al-Yasha Williams' 25th teaching anniversary

* Summer & Fall 2026 Courses

Our course offerings are live! pg.2

* We've Got a New Look!

Visit the [Department's new website](#) to learn more!



At 23rd Religious Studies Annual Lecture Series, Dr. Jacqueline Hidalgo highlighted the Bible's complex role in justifying and challenging U.S. immigration policy, cont. pg 3.

Did You Know? A Brief History of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Spelman College

The study of philosophy and religion at Spelman College originates in the College's founding through the collaboration of Friendship Baptist Church and missionaries from the American Baptist Convention, when chapel programs and religious study were closely connected. As Spelman moved away from sectarian affiliation, the religion curriculum evolved to reflect its liberal arts identity. The Departments of Philosophy and Religion merged

in 1997–1998 with a major curriculum revision in the religious studies in 2004 with emphasis on historical methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches in the study of religion, changes that strengthened graduate preparation for students. With the addition of new faculty and a curriculum review addressing philosophy's Eurocentric bias [...] cont. pg 3

Chair's Note:

More Important than Ever

Spring 2026 is an interesting time to be Department Chair. The United States is at war with Iran. There are ICE agents patrolling our city. Artificial intelligence is ever-present in academia. cont. pg3



-Dr. Gertrude Allen

Meet a Few of Our Philosophy & Religious Studies Alumni



[Shadavia Burnett '25](#)

After completing her Religious Studies senior thesis on nonprofit organizations, Burnett now works as an Advocate Mentor at Real Champions in South Carolina.



[Spencer Alexandria Nabors '16](#)

Assistant Professor of Philosophy and the Provost's Distinguished Faculty Fellow at Georgetown University.



[Ayanna D. Maddox '15](#)

Deputy Director and healing justice scholar and organizer at National Black Women's Justice Institute, Inc.



[Nikki Hoskins '09](#)

Assistant Professor of Religion and Ecology at Harvard University Divinity School.

Student Spotlight

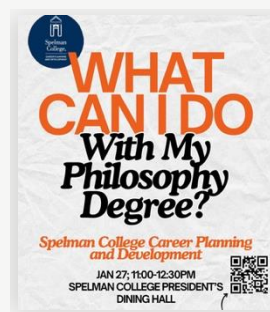


Nadia Rae Marriott '26 presented her paper, "The Effect of AI Companions on Disembodied Individuals," at The Morehouse-Atlanta University Center Undergraduate Philosophy Conference this February.



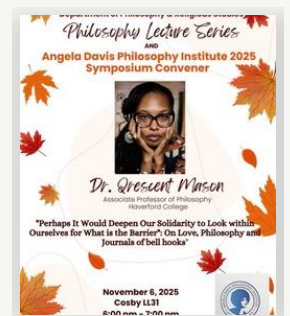
Ava Labossiere, a religious studies minor, has been accepted to the UNCF/Mellon May program and will be studying data centers and historical patterns of colonial expansion and land dispossession with Dr. Lydia Bremer-McCollum (lecturer in Religious Studies).

HOW WE'VE GATHERED



Harold Bell, Director of Career Planning & Development, spoke talked career opportunities, job prospects, and fellowships opportunities for majors.

The 23rd Philosophy Annual Lecture Series & Angela Davis Philosophy Institute welcomed Dr. Crescent Mason, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Haverford College.



Summer 2026 Courses

Introduction to the Study of Religion (REL111)	Introduction to Philosophy (PHL 220)
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Fall 2026 Courses

Introduction to Philosophy (PHL220)	History of African American Christianity (REL240)
Honors Philosophy (PHL191)	Practical Reasoning (PHI 200)
Introduction to the Study of Religion (REL111)	His of Western Philosophy (PHI 230)
Women and Religion (REL112)	Social & Political Philosophy (PHI382)
Introduction to the Study of Islam (REL222)	Metaphysics (PHI384)
African Derived Religious Traditions (REL237)	Bible, Sex, and Sexualities (REL305)
	Senior Projects (REL480)

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. [Iman AbdoulKarim](#) joined the Department as Assistant Professor in Spring 2026. She is an intellectual historian and theorist of religion whose work centers Black religion, modern spirituality, and feminist theory. She received her Ph.D. from Yale University and hosts [Grounded](#), a podcast mapping intersections between the spiritual and intellectual in Black thought.

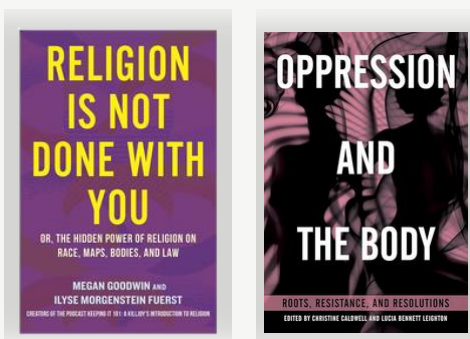
Dr. [Nami Kim](#) received a UNCF Mellon Programs Faculty Development Grant for the AY2026-2027 and was selected as the 2025-2026 Ewha Global Fellow (EGF) of Ewha Womans University. The fellowship is awarded to distinguished scholars to collaborate with faculty members at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, South Korea, on research and education.

Dr. [Rosetta Ross](#) (Professor Emerita) continues working as a co-PI on “the Garden Initiative for Black Women’s Religious Activism” project (\$250,000 grant award from the Henry Luce Foundation). Nine Spelman students are currently working as researchers to build a physical and digital repository of Black women’s religiously inspired contributions to American society.

Dr. [Shay Welch](#) is Vice President and a founding member of the Spelman AAUP chapter. Her publications include: “Living to Die: The Phenomenology of Existential Boredom in Borderline Personality Disorder” (forthcoming), “The Phenomenology of the Excruciating and Unidentifiable,” and “A Crip Perspective on the Paradoxical Role of Anxiety in ‘Mysterious’ Chronic Illness.”

Philosophy & Religion Now

What we think you should be reading



Did You Know? continued

the philosophy curriculum adopted a critical-canonical approach that situates Western philosophy alongside sociopolitical traditions, such as feminism, postcolonial and decolonial theory, philosophy of disability, and critical race theory. This shift aligns with broader changes in philosophy graduate programs that increasingly emphasize global and interdisciplinary perspectives.

“The Bible as a Text of Migration”



Dr. Jacqueline M. Hidalgo, Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at University of San Diego, delivered the Religious Studies Annual Lecture in February. Her lecture, “The Bible as a Text of Migration,” urged the audience to consider the Bible as a collection of texts emerging from “people on the move.” She also highlighted the Bible’s role in justifying both xenophobic and humane immigration policies in modern U.S. politics.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 10, 2026 @ 4PM
The Beverly Daniel Tatum Suites Private Dining

Chair’s Note continued

The measure of success for a college graduate is how much money she makes, rather than how much she knows. In all of this, philosophy and religious studies are needed more than ever before. We provide our students with tools to navigate the challenges posed by enormous social, political, and economic changes they will continue to face after graduation. Despite the challenges of this era, our students are well-equipped to grapple with new trends, changes in perspectives and information, social tensions, and political conflicts worldwide.