The American Council of Learned Societies Announces the 2020 Grantees and Fellows of the Luce/ACLS Program in Religion, Journalism & International Affairs

_Awards Recognize Outstanding Projects Merging Scholarly Research on Global Religions with Journalistic Engagement._

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va., NEW YORK, and PHOENIX (PRWEB) April 03, 2020 -- The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) is pleased to announce the 2020 grantees and fellows of the Luce/ACLS Program in Religion, Journalism & International Affairs. The program is made possible by the generous support of the Henry Luce Foundation.

Now in its fourth year, this innovative program connects scholars in the humanities and social sciences with journalists and media outlets to deepen public understanding of the roles religion plays in the most pressing issues faced by societies around the world, from migration and immigration, to politics and economic policy, the environment, gender and sexuality, health and medicine, media and entertainment, and more.

“As our world continues to seek understanding and a path forward in a time of great uncertainty, we want to celebrate examples of how humanists produce knowledge for the public good,” said Joy Connolly, president of ACLS. “The nine projects selected this year explore the profound ways religion influences our world and take concrete steps to engage the media, perhaps the ultimate influencer, in sharing that learning more broadly.”

The Luce/ACLS Program in Religion, Journalism & International Affairs offers two kinds of awards: collaborative programming grants for colleges and universities to support teams as they bridge scholarship on religion with journalistic training and practice; and fellowships for scholars in the humanities and social sciences who study religion in international contexts.

The 2020 grantees are:

- **Apocalyptic Narratives and Climate Change: Religion, Journalism, and the Challenge of Public Engagement** – Arizona State University

  This collaborative effort of the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict, the Narrative Storytelling Initiative, and the Global Futures Laboratory at Arizona State University will combine research on the apocalyptic thinking at the heart of many religions with training in the literature and journalism of social change so that narratives on climate change may be more effective with religious communities most resistant to environmental activism. Project leads: Tracy Fessenden (Religious Studies), Steven Beschloss (Journalism and Narrative Storytelling), Gaymon Bennett (Religious Studies), and Sarah Viren (Journalism and Languages & Cultures)

- **Informed Perspectives: Innovative Public Scholarship on Religion, Race, and Democracy** – The University of Virginia

  The Religion, Race & Democracy Lab at the University of Virginia will explore how religion intersects with
and helps construct racial identity in democracies around the world through a multimedia project that includes seminars with professional journalists and documentary makers on best practices for reporting at the intersection of religion, race, and global democratic movements, and three public-facing audio documentaries examining the dynamics of religion, race, and democracy as seen through events happening in Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Project leads: Martien Halvorson-Taylor and Kurt R. Schaeffer (Religious Studies)

Each project team will receive $45,000 for these interdisciplinary collaborations. Read more about the grants here.

This year’s seven fellows will pursue major research projects while collaborating with journalists to communicate their expert perspectives to public audiences. Among this year’s diverse projects are an exploration of the debate over women’s access to the Hindu temple at Sabarimala, Kerala, in India; a study of the dynamic roles of Indigenous women in environmental activism and the connections between contemporary protests and religious practices led by Indigenous women; and a multi-sited investigation into the cultural and religious impact of Gulf Nation development funding in Africa.

The 2020 fellows are:
• Febe Armanios, Professor, History, Middlebury College
  Satellite Ministries: The Rise of Christian Television in the Middle East
• Deepa Das Acevedo, Assistant Professor, Law, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa
  The Battle for Sabarimala
• Julia Gaffield, Associate Professor, History, Georgia State University
  The Abandoned Faithful: Sovereignty, Diplomacy, and Religious Jurisdiction after the Haitian Revolution
• Rosalyn LaPier, Associate Professor, Environmental Studies, University of Montana
  Protest as Pilgrimage
• Mara A. Leichtman, Associate Professor, Anthropology, Michigan State University
  Humanitarian Islam: Transnational Religion and Kuwaiti Development Projects in Africa
• Callie Maidhof, Visiting Assistant Professor, Global Studies, Colby College
  Borderline Settlers: Religion and Suburbia in Contemporary Israel
• Julia G. Young, Associate Professor, History, The Catholic University of America
  The Revolution Is Afraid: Mexican Catholic Nationalism and the Unión Nacional Sinarquista

Each fellow will receive $63,000 to implement their projects and will participate in a media training workshop and an annual symposium that brings the scholars into dialogue with renowned journalists to discuss key issues in religion and international affairs.

Learn more about the fellows’ projects and media engagement activities here.

Visit the Henry Luce Foundation’s website for more information about the Henry R. Luce Initiative on Religion in International Affairs and its grantmaking.

Read more about the application process for Luce/ACLS collaborative programming grants and fellowships, and about ACLS’s other programs for scholars in the humanities.

About the American Council of Learned Societies
Formed in 1919, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) is a nonprofit federation of 75 scholarly organizations. As the preeminent representative of American scholarship in the humanities and related social
sciences, ACLS holds a core belief that knowledge is a public good. As such, ACLS strives to promote the circulation of humanistic knowledge throughout society. In addition to stewarding and representing its member organizations, ACLS employs its $140 million endowment and $35 million annual operating budget to support scholarship in the humanities and social sciences and to advocate for the centrality of the humanities in the modern world.
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