The Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding initiative fosters research, teaching, and engaged service in an emerging and important sub-field in the study of religion. The individuals involved in the initiative aim to deepen the understanding of religions' roles in fostering and sustaining violence and conflict, as well as religions' ability to build peace and understanding. We also aim to cultivate, in ourselves and in our students, the skills necessary to be peacebuilders within the various communities in which we are involved.

We accomplish these goals by drawing on Emory's strengths and distinctiveness as an ethically engaged university, with a broad humanistic perspective in the study of religion, significant ties to the Atlanta community, and an active and productive commitment to international education and service.

The ethnic and religious violence that characterizes much of contemporary life calls for creative scholarship and teaching that are intellectually rigorous, interdisciplinary and engaged. These approaches must take seriously their obligation to be useful and accessible to individuals working to overcome violence and to reconstruct divided and broken societies. The initiative in Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding is a focused effort by Emory University to produce such scholarship. Given the multi-faceted nature of this work, the initiative undertakes numerous activities and presents various programs designed to explore and illuminate understandings of and approaches to the issues of religiously motivated violence and religions' roles in overcoming that violence and its consequences.

“Our university faculty possess a number of strengths in the field of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding — from research in the area of religion and violence, to a longstanding history of civil rights work in the Atlanta community. We are proud to be able to offer this unique educational opportunity to pass on this knowledge and experience to our students.”

— Earl Lewis, Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs

**Overview**

**Initiative Leaders**

Laurie Patton  
Charles Howard Candler Professor of Religions  
Director of the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence

Edward Queen  
Director of the D. Abbot Turner Program in Ethics and Servant Leadership  
Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies at the Center for Ethics  
Director of Research for the Institute of Human Rights

**Affiliated Faculty**

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im  
Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law

Michael Berger  
Assoc. Professor in Religion and Jewish Studies  
Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religion

Elizabeth Bounds  
Assoc. Professor of Christian Ethics  
Director of Faith and the City

Sam Cherribi  
Senior Lecturer in Sociology

Vincent Cornell  
Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Middle East and Islamic Studies

Elizabeth Corrie  
Asst. Professor in the Practice of Youth Education and Peacebuilding  
Director of Youth Theological Initiative

Tara Doyle  
Senior Lecturer  
Director of Tibetan Studies Program in India

John Dunne  
Assoc. Professor of Buddhist Studies

Tom Flores  
Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding Associate

David Jenkins  
Asst. Professor in the Practice of Church and Community Ministries  
Director of Contextual Education I and International Initiatives

Bernard Lafayette  
Distinguished Senior Scholar in Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding

Jan Love  
Dean of Candler School of Theology  
Professor of Christianity and World Politics

Ellen Ott Marshall  
Assoc. Professor in Christian Ethics and Conflict Transformation

Richard C. Martin  
Professor of Islamic Studies and History of Religions

Gordon Newby  
Chair and Professor of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies

Michael Owens  
Assoc. Professor of Political Science

Michael Perry  
Robert W. Woodruff Professor of Law

Don Seeman  
Assoc. Professor of Religion and Jewish Studies

Luther Smith  
Professor of Church and Community

Thee Smith  
Assoc. Professor in Religion and Conflict

Jacob Vance  
Asst. Professor of French

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“"The Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding initiative adds depth to an emerging scholarly field, providing the opportunity for students of religion at all levels to use their analytical skills in learning and teaching about religion, as well as its interface with the prevention of violence. This teaching takes place not only in the classroom, but also in wider society where interreligious literacy plays an increasingly vital role in global well-being."

— Jim Wagner, President of Emory University
Emory advances learning and engagement by supporting the most distinguished teaching, research and writing on religion, conflict and peacebuilding. The university’s doctoral minor track provides distinctive experience for students, educating them to be scholars and practitioners, academic and civic leaders. The concentration’s combination of superior academic teaching, research and direct practical experience provides its graduates with the skills and knowledge to make major contributions to society, by addressing a wide range of problems in a rapidly changing world.

“For students seeking to engage the deepening import of religious scholarship for peacebuilding, Emory’s Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding concentration offers membership into a community of diverse yet like-devoted mentors, teachers and fellows. In conversations with these persons, I find my interests expanded and myself pressed towards actions that matter. They also provide me with the global resources to take these actions.”
— Jeremy Lowe, Graduate Student

“My concentration in Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding brings a new set of questions to my research in Hinduism and South Asia. Issues of difference, boundaries and the limits of toleration invite comparison between Shirdi Sai Baba’s nineteenth-century message of nonsectarian syncretic devotionalism and how this message is interpreted and practiced in present-day India. Such an approach adds nuance to research and broadens conversations across fields of study.”
— Jonathan Loar, Graduate Student

The initiative holds regular international summits on Religious Conflict and Peacebuilding. These events are designed to collect, benchmark and publicize the valuable lessons learned through the global network. Emphasizing the work of NGO’s in their peacebuilding practices, these summits also provide an invaluable opportunity for religious leaders around the world to come together in a safe space for disciplined reflection, to address the issues that divide them and to develop peaceful solutions.

The initiative in Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding sponsors public lectures featuring distinguished scholar-practitioners who have made significant contributions worldwide in the field. As an institution deeply concerned with the growing challenges related to religious conflict and violence, Emory is proud to invite these experts to share their insights with the Emory and Atlanta community, and to explore and foster new possibilities for sustained peacebuilding. The 2006-2007 inaugural lecture series included Cynthia Mahmood, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, John Paul Lederach and Marc Gopin.