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2020-2021 Class of Ph.D. Fellows: Nature of Trust Project
Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study

Melissa Coles
Department of History
Year of Study: year three

Melissa Coles is a History doctoral student at the University of Notre Dame, where she studies sacred places, popular religion, and interfaith dialogue in North American in the long twentieth century. Her current research explores the history and theology of interreligious pilgrimages, especially places such as Chimayó and Lac Ste. Anne that are held sacred by the Catholic Church and indigenous groups.

Coles is from Loganville, Georgia. In 2011, she received her Bachelor of Arts in honors anthropology and peace studies from the University of Notre Dame. Then, she worked for three years as a school librarian and teacher at Saint Michael Indian School. In 2017, Coels received her Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School. While at Harvard, she was a Junior Fellow at the Center for the Study of World Religions.

Currently at Notre Dame, Coles is a NDIAS Ph.D. Fellow, a Kellogg Doctoral Student Affiliate, and a Richard and Peggy Notebaert Premier Fellow.

J. Columcille (Colum) Dever
History of Christianity, Department of Theology
Year of Study: year six

J. Columcille Dever is a sixth-year doctoral candidate in the History of Christianity Program in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. His research focuses on the theology and history of Early Christianity, particularly that of Roman North Africa, its reception in the Middle Ages, and in contemporary Systematic Theology. Dever's dissertation, "The God of Israel: A Theological Interpretation of Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem*," historically situates Tertullian's treatise and offers a theologically engaged reading of its enduring relevance. Marcion of Sinope had denied the identity of the God of Israel with the Father of Jesus and the relevance of the Jewish Scriptures to Christian theology. Dever describes Tertullian's decisive refutation of these views, tracing Tertullian's rhetorical strategy and theological insight in articulating both the unity of the Christian God and the coherence of the biblical narrative.

Dever received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and Classics from the University of Notre Dame (2007-11). As a Ray C. Petry Merit Scholar, he received his Master of Theological Studies degree at Duke Divinity School with a focus on Early Christian Studies (2013-15). He has published review essays in *Augustinian Studies, Modern Theology,* and *Pro Ecclesia,* as well as an article on Tertullian's appropriation of the classical myth of Prometheus in Oxford's *Studia Patristica*. Dever has presented his research at the International Patristics Conference, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the International Medieval Congress, among others.

Dever is currently a Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellow (2018-2021) and a Graduate Mission Fellow of the De Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture (2016-2021). He has received presentation and research grants from the De Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, the Nanovic Institute for European Studies, and the Notebaert Professional Development Fund, among others. His professional affiliations include the North American Patristics Society, the Society of Biblical Literature, American Academy of Religion, and the Colloquium on Violence and Religion.

Patrick Graff
Department of Sociology
Year of Study: year four

Patrick Graff is a fourth-year Sociology Ph.D. student in the Center for Research on Educational Opportunity (CREO) and a Burns Fellow in the Program for Interdisciplinary Education Research (PIER) at the University of Notre Dame. His academic research broadly focuses on educational inequality, teacher turnover, the organizational conditions of K-8 schools, and the characteristics of beginning career teachers. In partnership with the Indiana Department of Education, his dissertation utilizes longitudinal administrative data on students and teachers to better understand the effects of teacher turnover across school sector (e.g., traditional public, charter, and private schools), the lasting impacts of new and unlicensed teachers, and the relationship between relational trust in schools and teacher retention.

In addition to his research, Graff also served as a graduate fellow in the South Bend Mayor's Office from mid-2018 until December 2019. In this capacity, he represented the mayor to the South Bend School Board and the South Bend Community Schools Corporation while advising on local education issues. Following his doctoral work at Notre Dame, Graff hopes to continue to use his research training for roles in education policy that involve the translation of academic research to public policy and practice.

Graff received his undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame in 2011 with a BA in Philosophy and Chinese. He then taught third grade in Tampa, Florida for two years and earned a Master of Education degree from the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) Teaching Fellows program. Immediately following, he was offered the opportunity to return to Notre Dame to help recruit, mentor, and accompany ACE teachers as they entered the classroom in under-resourced Catholic schools across the country. He spent three years as an Associate Director of the ACE program before beginning doctoral work here in Notre Dame's Sociology Department.

Sam Grieggs
Department of Computer Science and Engineering
Year of Study: year four

Sam Grieggs is a 4th year Ph.D. student in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Notre Dame. As a member of the Computer Vision Research Lab advised by Professor Walter Scheirer, his work focuses on utilizing artificial intelligence to aid in humanities research. Specifically, Grieggs works on historical document analysis, where he develops algorithms that can automatically read and transcribe Medieval Latin manuscripts, parse pages for content, and identify scribal hands. He measures human performance in tasks such as reading to develop training regimes for artificial neural networks that guide them in becoming human-like. Grieggs's work also looks at how computer vision can assist humans in visual recognition tasks, as well as improving machine learning performance when unexpected data appears in practice.

Grieggs graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2017 with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and a minor in Mathematics. He has interned at the Air Force Research Laboratory in Rome NY. As a graduate student, Grieggs is an Arthur J. Schmitt Leadership Fellow, and his work has been funded by the Department of Justice.

Kristin M. Haas
Systematic Theology, Department of Theology
Year of Study: year four

Kristin M. Haas is a doctoral student in Theology at the University of Notre Dame specializing in systematic and historical theology. Haas investigates Christian approaches to the natural world, language, gender, and the Church as grounded in divine love yet damaged by the enduring legacy of sin. Engaged broadly in dialogue with ecological and feminist concerns, Haas is currently focused on the implications of these theological approaches for the biblical image of the "voice" of creation, the significance of place, and the significance of gender in biblical and Trinitarian theology. She is involved with collaborative projects on the abuse crisis in the Church and the meaning of religious life.

Haas received graduate degrees from Boston College (Master of Theological Studies) and the University of Notre Dame (Master of Arts in Theology). She completed her undergraduate degree through the Glynn Family Honors Program in the Program of Liberal Studies and International Peace Studies at Notre Dame.

Haas's research and teaching have been supported through fellowships at the Indiana University South Bend Center for a Sustainable Future, at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics, at the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, and at the McGrath Institute for Church Life. In addition to academic publications, her writing has appeared on sites such as *Church Life*, *Millennial Journal*, and *FaithND*.

Ross Jensen
Department of Philosophy
Year of Study: year five

Ross Jensen is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, and professionally he mostly studies ethics and social/political philosophy. More specifically, his research interests cluster around the virtues, moral psychology, land stewardship, localism/regionalism, democracy, and social traditions. Aristotle, Wendell Berry, and Alasdair MacIntyre are among the preeminent tutelary spirits of his philosophical imaginary.

Jensen's dissertation will sketch out an ecologically-informed neo-Aristotelian ethics and politics. Chapters of special interest will include those on the nature of love of one's home place, the relationship between such love and knowledge of one's home place, and a bioregional conception of political sovereignty, respectively. The dissertation will draw on work not only in several areas of philosophy but also in other disciplines, including anthropology, ecology, economics, history, political theory, and sociology.

Unprofessionally, Jensen is, among other things, an aspiring naturalist (think Audubon, not Quine), a good-timing Methodist (think Wesley, not Descartes), and a proud son of the American West who was raised in three of the Four Corners states.

Sara Judy
Department of English
Year of Study: year four

Sara Judy is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Notre Dame. Broadly interested in the relationship between poetry and religion, her research focuses on twentieth and twenty-first century American poetry and poetics, studying how religious ideas shape our understanding of what poetry is, what it does, and what it should do. Her dissertation examines the tradition of prophecy in American poetry, considering how poets have deployed prophetic rhetoric in order to motivate social change, while remaining skeptical of prophecy's claim to special authority. Her other research interests include lyric theory, liberation theology, and postsecularism.

Judy received her undergraduate degree from Bennington College, her Master's degree from the University of Vermont, and an MFA in poetry from the University of Notre Dame. She has presented her research at the American Literature Association, Northeast MLA, the Modernist Studies Association, and the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900. In addition to participating in the Moreau College Initiative at Westville Penitentiary, she has served as Senior Managing Editor for the journal *Religion & Literature*.

Judy's research has been supported by Notre Dame's Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, the Notebaert Professional Development Fund, and the Graduate Student Union. She has

also received grant funding from the Special Collections and Archives at UC San Diego. Her professional affiliations include the American Society for Religion and Literature, the American Comparative Literature Association, and the Academy of American Poets.

Megan Levis
Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
Year of Study: year six

Megan Levis is a Bioengineering doctoral candidate at the University of Notre Dame. She investigates multi-scale coordination of cell communication and how it relates to changing mechanical properties of organs during development. To facilitate her interdisciplinary research, Levis has also developed rapid fabrication methods to create novel microfluidics that are low cost. Interested in the social ramifications of biotechnology and engineered multicellular systems, her research extends to consider the ethics of synthetic biology and systems bioengineering.

During her time at Notre Dame, Levis has held a number of fellowships relating to leadership and socially engaged research. She was a Graduate School Leadership Advancing Socially Engaged Research (LASER) Fellow, participated in the Reilly Center's Social Responsibility of Researchers (SRR) Program, and has been a Center for Ethics and Culture Sorin Fellow for the past two years. She has led several programs aimed at the recruitment and retention of women in science and engineering, such as co-organizing an annual STEM career day for middle school girls, Notre Dame's Expanding Your Horizons Conference, as well as chairing her department's graduate and post-doctoral women's network.

Levis's research in the Zartman Lab has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, The National Science Foundation, and the University of Notre Dame. She is a current recipient of the Mara H. Wasburn Early Engineering Educator Grant from the American Society for Engineering Education. Her professional affiliations include the Biomedical Engineering Society, and The American Society for Engineering Education.

Nicholas Roberts
Department of History
Year of Study: year five

Nicholas Roberts is a doctoral candidate in History at the University of Notre Dame. Roberts's dissertation is a global history of the Omani Empire in the nineteenth century, focusing on its role in fomenting the emergence of modern capitalism in the Indian Ocean, and thus the world.

Roberts's research has taken him to fourteen archives in eight countries. As an NDIAS fellow, he is interested in refining his research on how the domains of the Omani Empire were a crucial

space where entrepreneurs from throughout the world came to trust in capital as an actor unto itself in shaping their lives and their futures. Given his research, he is always interested in chipping away at our collective "trust" in Eurocentric narratives of world history.

Before Notre Dame, Roberts earned a Master's in Global, International, and Comparative History from Georgetown University. His broader research, training, and interests lie in Islamic Studies and world history.

Emily Smith
Department of History
Year of Study: year four

Emily Smith is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame. She is interested in how women in the United States have understood motherhood as religious practice and obligation. Smith's dissertation examines how Catholic and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint (LDS) women experienced, described, and challenged religious pronatalism and sacralized maternity in post-WWII America. Her research centers on twentieth-century American history; women, maternity, and reproduction; and religion in America.

Smith graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Religion and Psychology from Kalamazoo College, and a Master's of Theological Studies with a concentration in Women, Gender, Sexuality, and Religion from Harvard Divinity School. She will serve as the Gender Studies Graduate Student Teaching Apprentice and President of the Union of Graduate Historians for the 2020-2021 academic year. In addition to participating in Notre Dame working groups in history of religion and gender, Smith co-organizes the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality History Working Group.

Dominique Vargas
Department of English
Year of Study: year five

Dominique Vargas is a Ph.D. candidate in English with a minor in Gender Studies, a Graduate Fellow with the Institute for Latino Studies, and a graduate associate with the Kaneb Center at the University of Notre Dame. She researches and teaches 20th and 21st century American literature with a focus on race, gender, linguistics, and literary theory. Her dissertation, "Strategic Insurgency after NAFTA: Coalition, Performance, and Realisms in Multi-ethnic Women's Literature," explores the varied uses of the corporeal body in contemporary literature by women of Canada, the United States, Mexico, the Northern Triangle, and the Caribbean. She argues that nonrepresentational and nonverbal discourses in literature of the Americas actively build coalition among women of color. She claims that the relational trust of these coalitions, built through a repertoire of nonrepresentational discourses, is an ethical choice over visibility.

Vargas received her undergraduate degree in English and a master's degree in English Literature and Language from St. Mary's University. She also received a Master of Fine Arts degree in writing and poetics from the Jack Kerouac School at Naropa University. In January 2020, her article, "Slow Encounter," was published in *Post45 Contemporaries*. She has presented her research at the Association of the Arts of the Present, the South Central Modern Language Society, and The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States.

At Notre Dame, Vargas has taught freshman composition, American literature, and gender studies. Vargas received a Presidential Fellowship from the University of Notre Dame for academic years 2016-2021.

Luiz Vilaça
Department of Sociology
Year of Study: year four

Luiz Vilaça is a Ph.D. student in Sociology and a Kellogg Ph.D. Fellow at the University of Notre Dame. His current work focuses on two questions. First, how do state organizations build autonomy and capacity to fight corruption? To answer this question, Vilaça examines the case of anti-corruption reform in Brazil, where investigative agencies managed to convict hundreds of corporate executives and politicians from multiple sectors of the state, in a case known as Operation Car Wash (CW). His dissertation compares CW with four failed anti-corruption investigations and draws on 81 original interviews with prosecutors, detectives, and judges, providing one of the first on-the-ground accounts of how federal investigators manage cases of grand corruption.

The second part of his dissertation examines the conditions under which prosecutors focus their attention on white-collar crime. Vilaça draws on interviews with Brazilian prosecutors to explain how they built a professional ethos focused on fighting white-collar criminals. He combines the qualitative study of Brazilian prosecutors with comparative historical analyses of prosecutors in the United States, Germany, and Italy.

Before coming to Notre Dame, Vilaça received his undergraduate and master's degrees in political science from the University of Brasília. His research has been published in *Mobilization* (forthcoming) and *Information, Communication & Society*.